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Interim Technical Report No. 3
(Second Edition)

THE JAPANESE LABOR BOSS SYSTEM

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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION

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A Description and a Preliminary Sociological
Analysis

Submitted by:

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RESEARCH IN JAPANESE SOCIAL RELATIONS
(RJSR)

Interim Technical Report No. 3:

The Japanese Labor Boss System:
A Description and a Preliminary Sociological Analysis

Note: This report consists of a generalized description, some typical case studies, and a preliminary theoretical interpretation of the Japanese "labor boss" system. The materials covered in this report were collected by staff members of the Public Opinion and Sociological Research Division, GHQ SCAP (Japan Occupation) in 1950-51. The present form of the report may be regarded as a tentative and incompletely conceptualized version of a longer treatise on the labor boss system. This will appear at a later date as a portion of a general monograph on Japanese social and economic relations. The present report has been prepared in response to numerous requests for a preliminary treatment of the data. (See also, Project RJSR, Interim Technical Report No. 1, "Social and Attitudinal Research in Japan: The Work of SCAP's Public Opinion and Sociological Division".)

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

This is a second and unrevised edition of an original report first published in June 1952. It is, as the title suggests, a preliminary analysis of the Japanese labor boss system.

Since the report was written, an extended monographic analysis of the oyabun-kobun system of social relationships--which underlies not only the labor boss system, but many other concrete Japanese social groupings--has been attempted. In the process of preparing this monograph, clarification of a number of points left inadvertently ambiguous has been achieved. Consequently, when it became necessary to put out a second edition of this report, there was some question as to whether or not to revise the original version. However, due to lack of time, it was decided to re-issue this second edition without revisions and to summarize in this preface some of the more important points needing clarification. Accordingly, the following comments are made;

1. If this report were to be re-written, the distinction between the "instrumental" and "expressive" systems of social organization would be featured. (For definition of these concepts, see page 50 ff. of the present report.) For instance, in each of the case studies the "instrumental organization" of the group would be described first, in order to demonstrate the rational basis for the organization of the particular group; that is, its concrete economic or occupational goals and tasks. Following this, the "expressive organization" would be described in order to demonstrate how the same group of individuals is organized to meet the non-rational, affiliative, emotional and other human needs; that is, to promote solidarity. The central theoretical issue of the paper then would concern the way in which the oyabun-kobun system can be seen as the institutionalized means for organizing the "expressive" relationships of any Japanese labor boss group. It is believed that the understanding of the ways in which the instrumental organization is coordinated with the expressive organization within a given Japanese factory will go a long way toward explaining the apparent juxtaposition of "familistic" patterns on the one hand, and industrialism on the other.

2. Another matter which is not adequately handled in the report concerns the role the oyabun-kobun system plays in the formation of what sociologists have called "primary groups." In a society like Japan, where social relationships outside of the family and kin groups are more restricted as compared with the United States, the presence of an institutionalized means for establishing a closely-knit solidaristic group is greatly needed. It is submitted that the obvious popularity of the oyabun-kobun institution is both a symptom of

this "need" as well as a mechanism for satisfying this "need."

3. Still another major point concerns the fact that this report focusses attention on the oyabun-kobun institution, and thereby gives an impression that such an institution is unique to Japan. On the contrary, some of the basic elements of this system of social relations are found the world over. An example would be the well-known compadre relationship found in Middle America and in medieval Europe. Both the compadre and the oyabun-kobun system involve a system of social obligations which are of the *gemeinschaft* type and in which "familistic" terms are used to denote this close personal relationship. Some discussion of these comparative cases would provide a more rounded discussion.

4. Closely related to the preceeding point is the following: because the report fails to draw upon analogous cases from other societies a certain limitation of perspective is evident. For instance, there is much information available in the literature on the general social or cultural conditions which give rise to the increase or decrease in functional significance of the compadre and other similar institutions, known technically as "ritual kinship" institutions. The literature indicates that the development of universalist religions, the rise of nationalism, the growth of industrialization and the appearance of social classes are related to the functional significance of these ritual kinship institutions. Accordingly, it may be that the presence or absence of these factors in Japan may have an bearing upon the existence of labor boss groups and other forms of oyabun-kobun associations. This perspective is believed to be valuable in making a balanced interpretation of the significance of the labor boss system in Japan. The forthcoming monograph on the oyabun-kobun institution will attempt to demonstrate this point.

5. Finally, among others two technical issues may be raised. Throughout the present report, the word kumi is used to designate the group composed of the "labor boss" (oyabun or "father" status) and his immediate followers called kobun ("child" status). This is correct in so far as this group is conceived of as an occupational group; but it is incorrect if the same group is thought of as a "social" or "fraternal" group. To put this in terms of the above-mentioned "instrumental-expressive" distinction, kumi is the term to be used when referring to a group organized in the "instrumental" system; however, when the same individuals are organized in the "expressive system," the term most commonly used is "miuchi."

Finally, on page 1, there is a statement to the effect that the authority system of the labor boss organization is based on principles "patrimonialism" (Max Weber). While this is perhaps a sufficiently accurate statement as far as it goes, it has not proved to be useful as an explanatory concept. The lines of investigation already alluded to in this preface would appear to be a more fruitful conceptual approach.

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THE JAPANESE LABOR BOSS SYSTEM: A DESCRIPTION AND
A PRELIMINARY SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

I. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE LABOR BOSS SYSTEM

A. Introduction: The Oyabun-Kobun System

In spite of the many obvious modern, rational-legal characteristics of the social, political, and economic institutions of contemporary Japan, observers have long recognized a series of traditional Japanese features diffused throughout these institutions. One configuration of such traditional features has been called, by both Japanese and by Allied officials in the Occupation of Japan, the "oyabun-kobun system."¹ The

1. Oya (parent)-bun (part, role, or status; ko (child)-bun (part, role, or status). Because these terms will be used frequently hereafter, they and other related terms with -bun suffixes will not be underlined. However, other Japanese terms, with the exception of proper names, will be underlined. Also, since there are no distinctions between singular and plural forms of Japanese words, these terms will be the same for both cases. Finally, sometimes the terms oyakata-kokata are used in place of oyabun-kobun. There does not seem to be any particular preference in the use of one form over the other, except that the suffix kata seems to be more formal than bun.

oyabun-kobun system is a particularistic pattern of social relationships based upon simulated patrimonial principles. In social groupings of this type, persons of authority assume obligations and manifest attitudes toward their subordinates much as if they were foster parents, and conversely the subordinates behave dutifully and hold feelings of great personal loyalty toward their superiors. Succession to the superior's position and status in the community, inheritance of his prerogatives, his personal-social influence, and his power to distribute rewards to subordinates are based on principles of patrimony.²

2. Patrimony is defined by Max Weber (Weber, 1947, pp. 346-354) as a type of traditional authority system comprising a "chief" and his personal "administrative staff", the members of which are bound to him by feelings of loyalty, in obligatory debt to him through his distribution of "benefices", and often in competition for his favor. Patrimonialism is frequently encountered in feudal social arrangements. While the oyabun-kobun system has many formal analogies to Japanese family and kinship institutions, the fact that the majority of members are not blood relatives of the oyabun, and that the activities of the group are not those of a genuine family, but of an economic and political unit, it seems more appropriate to characterize the system as approximating Weber's patrimonial type — at least tentatively.

During the Occupation of Japan, Allied officials found evidence of oyabun-kobun relationships in many significant segments of Japanese society. For example, in the urban underworld, there were the gurentai associations (gangs of hoodlums and racketeers) which extorted "protection money" from theatres, dance halls, beer parlors and other places of public entertainment, as well as the kashimoto groups of gambling syndicates which were controlled, like the gurentai, by one or more oyabun in a given district. In legally sanctioned spheres of activity, there appeared the tekiya, an oyabun-dominated association which controlled the licensing and operation of small open-air shops or "street-stalls" on the city streets of Tokyo, Osaka, Kobe, Kyoto and others. In politics, there were found a number of oyabun groups which exercised influence upon both voters and government officials on the local and national scenes. In the various trades and professions, evidence for oyabun-kobun tendencies were found for medical practitioners, professional sumo wrestlers, teachers of flower arrangement, actors, musicians, cab drivers, cabinet makers, and even "night soil" collectors.⁴ In rural society, many landlord-

4. "Night soil" refers to human excrement used as fertilizer.

tenant relations, boatowner-fisherman relations and employer-employee relations in forestry and other local industries were patterned on the oyabun-kobun system of relations.⁵

5. There are many studies of the pre-1945 forms of the oyabun-kobun system. Two noteworthy examples are: Kunio Yanagida (1937) and Shuko Shirayanagi (1912-14). However, these studies seem to contain many implicit cultural assumptions and are oriented toward antiquarian interests.

It is believed that a systematic analysis of the oyabun-kobun patterns existing in contemporary Japanese society is worthy of concerted sociological and cultural anthropological investigation. A few Western writers have made passing reference to the system but none have given it the attention it would seem to deserve.⁶ If such a research program

6. Some representative comments: Reischauer, 1950, pp. 216-217 (gangster groups); pp. 85-87 (in the context of "feudal" relationships between employers and employees); pp. 87-89 (how oyabun-kobun principles were used in the Zaibatsu organizations). Farley, 1950, pp. 62-64 (labor bosses). Embree, 1943, p. 15 (in the context of the "master-apprentice relation" or guild system). Haring, 1949, pp. 851-852 (in the context of family relations setting the norms for other relations, especially in the "patron-protege" relationships existing between families and other groups). Lederer, 1938, pp. 165-166 (Japanese ministries as consisting of "clan"-like groupings of chiefs and loyal followers).

were carried out it is felt that Westerners would be better able to "understand" many puzzling features of contemporary Japanese society and culture. For example, some of the brilliant insights developed by

Ruth Benedict in regard to the Japanese obligation system (e.g. on, ko, giri, ninjo, etc.) could be "located" more concretely in the framework of Japanese interpersonal relations and social organization.

7. These concepts are defined in Benedict, 1946, Chaps. 5, 6, 7.

But aside from intra-scientific considerations of Japanese society and culture, an understanding of the oyabun-kobun system of relationships will have considerable importance for a number of crucial problems with practical significance. Thus, since it is felt that the general type of relationship system represented by oyabun-kobun tendencies is widespread throughout Japanese society, its implications for power structure (particularly informal, "grass-roots" patterns) the nature of leadership, decision-making processes, forms of authority, and the problem of persistence of traditional values in an industrialized society, are extensive. On the most concrete level, a knowledge of oyabun-kobun principles would seem to be of considerable convenience in negotiations between Japanese and members of other societies, in such contexts as economic arrangements, labor relations, and the values implicit in cultural exchange and diplomacy.

The present report is concerned with a preliminary conceptualization of a particularly well-defined institution which is patterned on these oyabun-kobun principles. This institution is called the "labor boss system". A general description of the labor boss system will follow immediately, following which, particular case studies and sociological interpretations of the labor boss system will be presented.

B. Characteristics of the Labor Boss System

The "labor boss system" refers to a pattern of recruitment and organization of laborers modelled on principles of oyabun-kobun relationship. Its basic structural feature is the relationship of several kobun (i.e. workers) to an oyabun who technically functions as a labor recruiter, "straw boss", and sometimes, a teacher of occupational skills. The normatively-defined relationship between oyabun and kobun is expectedly a reciprocal one of obedience and loyalty to the superior and of guidance and benevolence to the subordinate. This type of labor organization is known in Japanese as the romu kyokyu jigyo ("labor supply project") and prior to 1945, it generally received the sanction of public opinion and of the Japanese Government by virtue of its long tradition and the functions it has performed in the contemporary and "transitional" society of Japan.

In the several decades preceding the last war, the Japanese Government recognized the system by using "labor bosses" for recruitment of labor (particularly those of the casual and unskilled labor group) through its official employment exchanges. During the last war, the Government established the Romu Hokoku Kai (Patriotic Labor Association) for mobilizing manual laborers and, under its aegis, tens of thousands

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of "labor bosses" received official recognition. As labor mobilizers, such men became quasi-officials of the government. In the early years of the Allied Occupation of Japan, this organization, though changed in name, (e.g., the Romu Kyodo Kai (Labor Cooperative Association of Yokohama) continued as a practical system of supplying and organizing labor both for the Occupation Forces as well as for the domestic industries. It was estimated at this time that about 2 1/2 million workers out of a total industrial labor force of 15 million were dependent upon these "labor bosses" or "suppliers" for employment. Organized groups of such labor bosses were found most frequently among manual laborers in transportation, manufacturing, and service industries, but there were also substantial numbers among the skilled workers, especially in the building industry where the majority of the carpenters and other craftsmen were so organized. In these semi-skilled occupations, there were many practical nurses, fishermen, coal miners, longshoremen, and restaurant cooks whose employment was dependent upon labor bosses.

1) Principal structural features. The structural foundation of the labor boss organization is the relationship of the kobun to the oyabun; that is, the child-role to the parent-role. These relationships can be extended so that they form a very complex organization governing the employment and virtually the lives of several thousand workers, or they can be confined to a simple organization of three or four workers. In the former case, it comes into being when a "big boss" dominates a dozen or more kobun below him, and these in turn become oyabun to kobun subordinate to them and so on — spreading the oyabun-kobun organizational pyramid with the principal boss at the apex. Thus, in 1946 the well-known Matsui "association" flourished in Kanagawa Prefecture, eventually controlling some 45,000 member workers.⁸

8. See Miriam Farley, 1950, pp. 62-63, who reports 138,000 workers under Matsui's domination. Data obtained by Project RJSR personnel set the figure at 45,000.

On the other hand, there are the many small and relatively independent bosses who may have only two or three kobun. Such bosses may work alongside their workers and develop a very close *esprit de corps*. Often in such cases, the boss serves as a person who trains his kobun in the particular customs and techniques of the trade or occupation.

The duration of the oyabun-kobun relationship is also variable, depending in large part upon the customs of the particular industry or trade. Traditionally, where it has been primarily a guild-like system, the relationship has been a life-long arrangement. However, in general, contemporary manifestations seem to be of shorter duration.

The emphasized normative patterns of the oyabun-kobun system define a relationship in which the kobun serves obediently and manifests complete personal loyalty to the oyabun. The oyabun in turn are expected to

protect and care for their kobun in the prescribed benevolent fashion. The strength of these reciprocal obligations, of course, varies according to the circumstances and the expected duration of this relationship.

2) Functions of the labor boss. The labor boss' main technical function and role is to find employment for his men, but he has related obligations of caring for his kobun in times of illness, of giving or loaning money in times of need, and of assuring minimum subsistence in periods of unemployment. But, above all, once such relationships are established on a permanent basis, there is a tendency to wrap up virtually all of the oyabun's and the kobun's occupational and private life into this network of social relations. Even the immediate family members of the principals, if the latter are married, become involved in the hierarchical, duty-laden relationship.

Though the labor boss system is found most frequently among the casual and manual laborer class of occupations, it is by no means limited to these groups. Some skilled and semi-skilled occupational groups like carpenters, fishermen, artisans and miners are included in the labor boss system. In these occupations especially, the oyabun's role of training and teaching the trade to an apprentice kobun is as important as that of finding employment for them. In such cases, there is likely to be a continuing relationship of respect and obligation between oyabun and kobun even after the latter are, so to speak, "on their own".

Support for such a system of relationships as this does not arise solely out of the needs of the workers. Employers, too, have directly or indirectly aided the system. Many of them favor the system because it enables them to avoid the traditional obligations involved in employer-employee relations. Since the workers of the labor boss group are considered to be outside the family of regular company employees, the employers can shirk responsibility for such obligations with respect to boss-controlled workers. By the same token, the employers can avoid certain burdens required by labor and social security legislation.

Many employers have also come to depend upon the expert selection of workers by bosses to fill their particular requirements for skilled workers. The exhaustive examination of the qualifications and character references of such workers is performed by the bosses, particularly those who have specialized in one industry and who are intimately associated with the same group of workers over a period of years. Moreover, both in the case of casual workers and of skilled workers, employers tend to regard with apprehension the hiring of strangers regardless of whatever formal letters of introduction and reference they may present. The labor boss, thus, functions as a guarantor and character reference for the workers he personally recruits. The Japanese have a term for this:

watari wo tsukeru ("to put up a bridge" to gap the social distance between strangers).⁹ The boss thus plays the role of a "personnel

9. This, in turn, may be seen as one manifestation of the tendency in Japanese society to mediate all relationships by the use of the "go-between". In general, relationships between people are defined sharply in terms of "in-group" and "out-group" memberships. Contacts with the out-group members imply a potential conflict of goals and interests and thus the relationships with such individuals are defined as exceedingly awkward and delicate. The adjustment of the potentially conflicting interests is commonly made by the use of a neutral third person who is a member of the in-group of both parties. (See Haring, 1949, p. 852).

director" as well as that of an expert in particular technical work processes.

The labor boss system should be distinguished from a recruitment system in which the labor suppliers' only function is that of recruitment. In such a system, the relations of the supplier and the recruiter is terminated when the latter begins working for the employer. Examples may be found in the labor suppliers who recruit "workers" directly from villages for employment in the textile mills and for houses of prostitution, on a "contract" or indenture basis. Such labor recruiters are sometimes salaried employers of the hiring establishment and sometimes "brokers" who receive a fee for their services, either as outright payment or as a certain percentage of the recruited person's wages. However, for purposes of the present report, this variation in labor recruitment will not be considered apart of the "labor boss system". Where reference is made to this type, it will be designated as the "labor broker system".

3) Socially problematic features of the labor boss system. The frequently made charge that the labor boss system is "undemocratic" deserves brief discussion because, in the reading of the latter pages of this report, the present functional analysis of the system could be interpreted as a complete justification of its desirability. From the point of view of the boss-controlled workers, certain characteristics of the system prevent the legitimate exercise of their generally recognized civil rights. The system enables the boss to extract a percentage (commonly between 10-30 percent) of the workers pay; it tends to prevent workers from either quitting their jobs or changing them at will; it makes workers highly dependent upon the personal goodwill of the "boss" to maintain their jobs; and it prevents collective bargaining for the improvement of working conditions and the increase of wages.

From the standpoint of management, the labor boss system creates certain obstacles to the effective use of the potential services of the labor under its control. It obstructs the selection, promotion, and discharge of these laborers on the rational basis of ability and performance, and it places certain limitations upon what are generally considered to be management's prerogatives, viz., the direct supervision and control of the labor force and the determination of the rate and techniques of production.

4) Attempts to eliminate the labor boss system. Though it was obvious to the Allied officials at the beginning of the Occupation that this system of recruitment and control by bosses contained many "undemocratic" features, local military government commanders were interested in getting their immediate job of reconstruction done and could not be concerned with reform. By late 1947, however, the Headquarters staff, in cooperation with officials of the Japanese Government, had prepared the basic foundations for a program to modify or eliminate these bossist tendencies in labor relations. Several important pieces of labor legislation — particularly, the Labor Standards Law (September 1947) and the Employment Security Law (December 1947) — were promulgated and a system of public employment exchanges were established in some 45 local offices throughout Japan. An active education and reorientation program was instituted and visible symbols of force were placed in all districts in the form of "labor boss inspectors" who were expected to ferret out violators of the new labor statutes.

In the 28 months between March 1948 and July 1950, it was reported by the Japanese Government that these "labor boss inspectors" were able to eliminate 42,000 labor bosses and to "free" some 1,113,000 workers from boss-control. Allied officials concerned with labor reforms, however, were skeptical about these figures for the following reasons: their admittedly unsystematic, but objective observations indicated that these figures were cumulative data on initial termination of labor boss organizations, and that these data failed to take into account cases where operations were resumed after being once terminated. Also important was the fact that among these thousands of reported cases, only 13 labor bosses and six employers were successfully prosecuted under the provisions of the new labor laws. Moreover, most of these few prosecutions were of a technical nature and could be corrected by simple changes in organization or technical procedure.

It was evident that in spite of explicit legal prohibition, widespread propaganda, and regular inspections, the labor suppliers continued to exert their influence upon the employment system of local exchange offices, and the employers continued to use the services of the bosses. Many "labor bosses" short-circuited the official employment exchange offices and took their underlings directly to prospective employers where they were often registered on the company roster as "foremen" to cover up their prohibited operations. Other labor suppliers of this illegal type regarded themselves as "independent labor contractors" who "hired" laborers through the official exchange offices and contracted with the employer establishments for the labor services of their groups. Recent information from Japan indicates that these trends are continuing and even accelerating.

With this introductory description in mind, the case studies and preliminary sociological interpretations of the labor boss system may be considered. A careful reading of these materials may help to explain some of the difficulties inherent in the program for the elimination of the labor boss system.

II. THE PRIMARY ORGANIZATION OF THE LABOR BOSS SYSTEM: The Kumi

A. Definition

The association of a labor supplier and a group of workers who are formally related through oyabun-kobun ties constitutes the primary organization of the labor boss system. This primary organization will be known in this report as the kumi.¹⁰

10. When this word is modified by proper nouns or other adjectives it is pronounced as "gumi". Examples are: Shimizu Gumi, Sano Gumi, etc.

The word kumi in current Japanese usage designates a wide variety of social and economic organizations, as for example, a gang, a guild, an association, a company and even a corporation. It is believed that the term originally was used to designate a group or collectivity in which the members were organized by means of oyabun-kobun ties. Thus, certain stock companies which bear the name kumi today are probably organizations which had an original oyabun-kobun structure and eventually developed into a legally-constituted company as a result of expansion of operations and favorable business conditions. In the present report, however, the term kumi will be used to designate the elementary organization (or "one generation" of oyabun-kobun relationship).¹¹ As such it must be distin-

11. Throughout the remaining portion of this paper, the term "oyabun" will be used synonymously with the concept "labor boss" while his subordinates in the kumi will be designated as "kobun". However, as we shall see, not all subordinates of a labor boss are "kobun". Some workers may be supervised by the oyabun, but do not belong to his kumi by virtue of the fact that they have not been ceremonially initiated. To prevent confusion between the subordinate workers who belong to the kumi and those who do not, we will designate the latter type as "non-kumi" workers.

guished from larger organizations which involve several layers or "generations" of oyabun-kobun ties, as was illustrated in Part I by the Romu Kyodo Kai.

B. Some Mechanisms for Promoting Solidarity in the Kumi.

As in any customary social institution, there is developed within the labor boss system a number of mechanisms which function to maintain solidarity, morale, and purposive activities of the group. Accordingly, some of these mechanisms as they appear at certain focal points in the life of the kumi may be considered. These are: the induction of new members, the termination of membership, and the jingi rituals.

1. The initiation of new members. When a new member is accepted in a tightly knit kumi, the probability is high that the group will celebrate such an occasion with ceremonial observances. A fairly typical case of an initiation ceremony held in 1947 by a traditional kumi will be presented below: (This kumi organization is discussed in greater detail in part III of this report.)

The initiation ceremony took place in the "office" of the oyabun, and was held on a festive day honoring the local mountain deity. Two kobun were initiated. The ceremony was divided into two parts: the first was a rather simple "oath taking" ritual which was "witnessed" by a "go-between". The witness was an oyabun of another kumi operating in the same construction project. The principal oyabun, after a brief introduction, announced to each candidate that: "I will make you my kobun". To this the kobun candidates responded, "By your special generosity, I will become your kobun". The oyabun then placed two new name plates -- small, thin boards, with Japanese characters written on them -- on the wall of his office alongside other names of kumi members. The name plates resemble the following specimen:

<u>Kobun:</u>	Hideo Hayashi
<u>Newly named as:</u>	Hideo Sano ¹²

12. "Sano" is the family name of the oyabun.

As he placed these name plates on the wall, the oyabun commented: "This is like getting a foster-child". This marked the end of the first part of the ceremony, and the members of the kumi, joined by the oyabun's wife, sat down in the usual Japanese fashion on the floor and around a small short-legged table.

The oyabun sat at the "head" of the table with his wife on his left. The go-between sat on the left side of the table nearest the oyabun and all others were arranged around the table according to seniority in the kumi.

On the table were two trays: one containing two small wine cups (sakazuki); two containers of rice-wine; a plate with two cooked fish laid stomach-to-stomach; and a pair of chopsticks; and the other tray having only a large diamond-shaped ceremonial paper (hosho).

The second part of the ceremony began with the go-between taking one wine flask and pouring the ritual rice wine with three distinct pouring motions into the cup held by the principal oyabun. As he did this, the go-between solemnly stated, barely above a whisper,

"I shall now be honored to act as a go-between". Taking up the chopsticks, the go-between then dropped a pinch of salt and a piece of fish into the filled cup. The ritual was repeated again for the second cup which was held by the oyabun's wife. During this activity, everyone else maintained strict silence.

Next, the oyabun and his wife picked up their cups and each took three small sips. The go-between stood up immediately, picked up the oyabun's cup and offered it to the person sitting nearest the oyabun's right; while the wife's cup was presented to the man on her left. Each person, in turn, took his required number of sips and passed it on to the next. One cup went around counter-clockwise and the other clockwise. When the cups were returned to the head of the table again, the go-between poured the remaining wine, and put the pieces of fish and salt on the ceremonial paper which was then on the second tray. Slowly and methodically he kneaded this combination and formed little wads of damp paper. Then, standing up, he threw these wads against the ceiling. This completed, he sat down and shouted, "May I borrow your hands" (Will you please clap your hands). Immediately everyone in the room clapped his hands rhythmically for a few seconds. Somebody then shouted, "medeto gozai-masu (congratulations)", and the ceremony was over. With this, the oyabun got up and expressed his appreciation to the go-between, and shortly the somber ceremony gave way to a hilarious drinking party.

There are a number of symbolic and sacred elements in the description just presented which deserve comment. The ceremony took place on a "happy day", that is, the holiday of the local mountain god. The diety's help in the protection of these newly-made oyabun-kobun ties were thought to be important. The role of the go-between was significant both as a witness to the event and as a visible representative of the larger community which sanctions these new ties in kumi relations. The acquiring of the oyabun's family name by the kobun, as recorded on the name plate, and the statement about acquiring a "Foster-child", point to strong familistic notions. The two fish laid belly-to-belly is clearly symbolic of birth. Though not discussed above, a few days later a presentation of the traditional workmen's dyed cotton jacket with the name of the kumi and the relationship to the kobun on it was made. This "gift" was said to represent "birthday" clothes. The mixture of the salt, fish, and ritual wine was the symbol of blood. The three sips of wine is interesting in view of the fact that the Japanese marriage ceremony has a similar ritual element. Finally, the vows taken to become a kobun is interesting in view of the fact that the labor boss system is an economic occupational organization. It is noteworthy in this oath that nothing is explicitly stated about the purpose and duration of the relationship, the conditions under which the kobun are to serve, his technical functions or the rights and obligations of either parties to the relationship. Like the marriage ceremony, it is evident that the oath at least ideally

is intended to cover all contingencies "for better or for worse".¹³

13. Incidentally, the precise ritual significance of the throwing of the wadded paper upon the ceiling is unknown to the writers at this time.

A note of caution: the above description contains elements which may appear to be descriptive of archaic and "quaint" customs of old Japan. The case was not described in order to give the impression that the people belonging to such kumi were isolated from the main currents of contemporary Japanese life, or that their beliefs were anachronistic survivals of the "folk culture" of Japan. This ceremony actually took place in 1947 and similar ceremonies were regularly reported to the research staff, all of which indicates that such rituals play roles of considerable importance in the functioning of the labor boss system. Moreover, as will be shown later, the people participating in such rituals are literate, have for the most part completed the required education for all Japanese citizens, have travelled extensively in Japan, and are quite conversant about matters which concern their community, nation, and the world.

2. Termination of Kumi Relationship. It was pointed out in the preceding paragraphs that the oath taken at the time of initiation was, among other things, highly unspecific as to the duration and functions of the relationship. However, it is not to be implied that there is no specification whatsoever in the relationship itself. For one thing, the particular customs of the boss system within a particular industry or occupation defines within broad limits the duration of the relationship. Boss-worker relations among construction laborers and carpenters, for example, seem to be limited to the duration of the particular job (e.g., when the particular bridge is completed, or a building is finished) for which the oyabun had "contracted" with the employing company. On the other hand, the continuation of the traditional boss-worker relationship as, for example, in the mines, seems to be one which is specified as of long duration. Here important factors like the number of years of training received from the oyabun and the difficulty of finding employment elsewhere without his aid or consent seem to require a longer relationship.

In general, then, there seems to be two broad types of relationship, the first or "discrete" type; and the second, the "continuative" type. The general features of each type may be discussed with respect to the problem of termination of the relationship:

The "discrete" type is one in which the oyabun calls together a group of workers for a specific task, contract, or project and makes no explicit promises concerning the continuation of relations after the completion of the task. This is typical of oyabun-kobun relations among the carpenters, cabinet makers, fishermen, forestry-workers, construction workers and similar trades. Thus, in the discrete type the oyabun-kobun groups or kumi are formed and terminated, for all practical purposes, correlative with the given task or project of the group.

The "continuative" type of relationship is found among the stevedores, service trades within large industries, the profession of practical nurse, extra-legal groups (e.g., gamblers), street-stall operators, and the like. These oyabun-kobun types of relationships are in one sense long-term relationships; there is no clear cut beginning and ending of the relationship on a group basis. Individuals are recruited within the group as individuals and they leave the group on an individual basis. Thus, the group identity is maintained indefinitely in spite of individual changes in personnel.

Now, the implications for termination of the relationship with each of these types are great. In the second, or continuative case, the initiation ceremony is done more or less individually. There is apt to be little group ceremony when the termination is effected. Such termination often takes place when either party decides that the relationship is not mutually satisfactory or ill-feeling has developed so that the relationship becomes untenable. As a result, the termination of the relationship often takes place amidst anger, and the simple command of the oyabun to the kobun to "return your sakazuki (rice cup used at the initiation ceremony)" or to "throw away your sakazuki" is enough to signify the end of the relationship and the correlated obligations.

In the case of the discrete type, there is at the beginning of the contracted job an initiation ceremony for the group as a whole and when the job is finished, there is usually a party or wine-drinking ceremony signifying the completion of the task. There is an implicit obligation on the part of the kobun to stay with the job until it is finished, regardless of the hard feelings and evidences of bad faith that may have occurred in the process. However, when the particular unit of work or the task has been completed, the kobun nominally have the right to choose whether or not they would like to continue the relationship with the oyabun when he passes to the next contracted project. Thus, especially in the discrete type, there is an element of continuous process of selection; that is, if the oyabun finds a particularly able kobun, he may continue to recruit him for other jobs and, by the same token, if the kobun found the particular oyabun satisfactory to him, he may assent to continue the relationship for the next project and so on, continuing "partnership" for a number of years.

However, whether a given relationship is part of a "discrete" or a "continuative" system, there exists for all boss groups certain grounds on which this oyabun-kobun relationship may be terminated. In addition to such intangibles as personality conflicts between the oyabun and the more or less automatic termination process characteristic of the discrete type, there are two general conditions and/or means by which termination results. The first is one in which the oyabun fails to live up to his minimum obligations to his kobun. These failures include the continued inability of the boss to find employment for the kobun and to furnish him with aid in time of illness, financial need or unemployment.

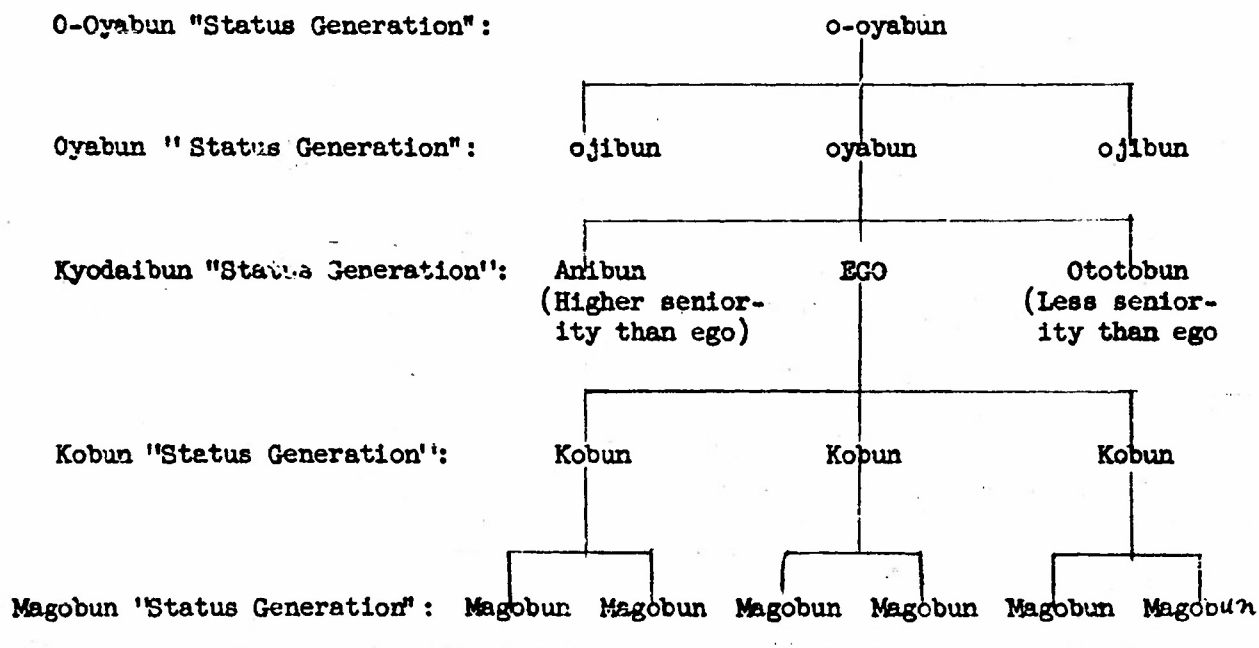
which are the obligations vitally necessary to maintain the system. The second is the "disposal" of the services of a kobun to another oyabun or employer. This can come about in one of three general ways: (a) by the boss selling, loaning, or "bartering" the services of the kobun to another oyabun or employer; (b) by the kobun changing his occupation, as for example, by leaving a job for farm work; and (c) by the kobun taking the initiative through devious means to join a more influential or successful oyabun, who in turn would negotiate with the former oyabun for the subject kobun's services. (A more detailed analysis of this last maneuver will be given in a later part of the report.) In summary, then, whether or not the relationship between a particular oyabun and kobun continues indefinitely or not depends to a large extent upon the oyabun's social and economic "power" — power as measured by his ability to find employment, to provide a modicum of social security, to exert influence upon other oyabun competitors, and to maintain his prestige and social standing in the larger community of oyabun-kobun relations,

3. The jingi and other ceremonial observances. A widespread ritual practice in the labor boss system is the jingi (roughly, "integrity") ceremony. This observance refers to a ritual in which the exchange of sacredly significant phrases takes place between members of the same or different kumi, nominally to establish relationship in a specific or generalized kumi brotherhood. Thus, when a kobun of one district visits a friendly kumi in another, the correct or satisfactory recitation of jingi is his admission to free lodging and board. The jingi ceremony may also serve to obtain for a kumi member certain other benefices, such as aid in seeking a job, pocket money, and special advice from other oyabun. Still other occasions for the ritual arise when a kumi member's loyalty is in question. The proper or improper recitation and behavior manifested during this ritual by the suspect is said to be a measure of his "true sentiments."

There are also many ritual observances of the kumi which are connected with the ceremonial calendar of the particular industry in which they are employed, as well as of the region in which they live. These religious and secular events provide further opportunities for the kumi to participate as a group. In addition to these, there are such occasions for ritual as the oyabun's return from a long trip, the completion of a major unit of work, the marriage of a kobun, the christening of an oyabun's grandchild, the death of a member of the kumi and subsequent anniversaries of this event — all of which are extremely important to the maintenance or the strengthening of the solidarity and morale of the kumi. These ceremonial events, then, symbolize the idea that the kumi is not merely an occupational association, but also a meaningful "way of life", a veritable society.

position or status he holds with respect to other particular individuals, he can be an oyabun, kobun, and anibun — all at the same time. This may be contrasted with a functional terminology in which, for example, a "foreman" is such to everyone in the work group or enterprise. Perhaps these oyabun-kobun terms may be clarified by presenting a diagram somewhat analogous to kinship diagrams commonly used by anthropologists (see Table I.). In this diagram, the point of reference is designated as EGO and all his theoretical kumi "relatives" are named relative to him.

TABLE I: SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM OF KUMI TERMS OF REFERENCE



It will be noted in the above Table that the term "status generation" is comparable to the use of the concept of generation in kinship system analysis. Like kinship groupings, on each "status generation" level, the number of statuses can be extended horizontally, but of course by a different mechanism. In kinship systems this horizontal extension is normally made by means of new marriage bonds; in oyabun-kobun systems, this extension is made possible by establishing new "brotherhood" relations (kyodaibun), as previously explained.

In many empirical kinship systems, there are terminological differences between "terms of reference" and "terms of address", the former referring to how a particular relative is classified in the system and the latter to how the relative is actually called or addressed by ego.

between the anibun and the ototobun are considerably weaker. Hence, in principle, the stress is placed upon "vertical" or hierarchical status relationships in the labor boss system, and this might be contrasted with the structural principle of a trade union in which the basic solidarity unit is that between workers of the same "horizontal" class or status. Vertical solidarity as manifested in feelings of loyalty, reverence, and conversely, of benevolence, seems to work against the feeling of "class consciousness" among workers of the same occupation or class, because the social bonds are greater between the worker and the kumi leader than among the workers themselves.

The concept of authority in the kumi is an important feature governing the relationship between the oyabun and his kobun. Authority in the kumi is legitimized on the basis that it has been handed down from the past, i.e., either "it has always existed", or "it has been customary". The oyabun who exercises authority is not so much a person of higher moral character or superior technical knowledge, but is rather a personal "chief", a necessary coordinator of personalities and decision-maker. His workers, the kobun, are not "members" of a free association with limited purposes or specific goals, but are "comrades" in a way of living which involves a multiplicity of social and economic goals and obligations. The tie that binds the workers to their chief is normatively not a self-interested one required by association in a common enterprise, but rather is personal loyalty and obligation.

Personal loyalty means that subordination and obedience are due to the persons who occupy positions of authority on the basis of custom, not on the basis of enacted regulations. It also connotes the fact that the leader's prerogatives, other than certain limitations imposed by the specific norms, are a matter of free personal choice. In the oyabun-kobun system, this relative arbitrariness of action permitted the oyabun by the norms of the system may have dire consequences for an oyabun who is placed in a loyalty-conflict situation, or whose verbal statements may be susceptible of misinterpretation. The system subjects an oyabun to temptations of corruption, graft, bribery, and to deduct excessively from the worker's wages. It is also these particular characteristics which attract frequent public condemnation of the labor boss system.

Yet, on the other side of the coin, since the oyabun's prerogatives are not restricted by specific legislation and regulations like those of a bureaucrat or a foreman in a rationalized industrial plant, the opportunities to confer "largess" (onkei) on the basis of personal likes and dislikes are also great. The oyabun's bestowing of special allowances in cases of illness, unemployment, and indebtedness of his kobun are examples of this largess. However, aside from what is customary, personal motivations in these acts may be based upon principles of self-interest, common sense or practical necessity.

From the standpoint of modern employment practices, other acts of largess might be considered taboo; viz., the prerogative of the oyabun to select or to promote his kobun on the basis of personal choice. This authority of the oyabun to appoint or to promote the kobun on the basis of personal favoritism is an important element governing their relationship. Those kobun who are ambitious and desirous of climbing in the hierarchical system therefore tend to compete for this preferential treatment. Manifestations of proper and respectful behavior in speech and action are not the only prerequisites. The kobun does not attempt to impress the oyabun in working situations alone; he also does as many odd jobs as he can for the oyabun and his family in his off-duty hours. Such tasks may be menial like running errands, chopping wood or fetching water. Nevertheless, the recognition that this is one of the ways for rising in the system or remaining on good personal terms with the oyabun makes it an important factor governing the relationships between the "boss" and his worker.

The above sketch of the oyabun-kobun relationships in respect to authority, personal loyalty, and preferential treatment is admittedly an idealized picture. To provide a more balanced presentation, some indication of the checks and balances governing the relationship may be given. The most obvious of these is that, ultimately, the authority of the oyabun depends upon the willingness of the kobun to respect his authority. The oyabun cannot ignore the fact that numerous cases of insubordination would be indicative of poor morale. The fact that kobun do run away or become attached to other oyabun — in spite of the frequent existence of unwritten codes and agreements among labor bosses designed to prevent this — impels the oyabun to mend his ways. Similarly, among kobun the competition to win the "eye" of the oyabun is limited and controlled by informal sanctions of ridicule, "character-assassination" and ostracism.

3. Anibun-Ototobun Relationships. The anibun-ototobun (elder-younger brother) relationship becomes established when an oyabun acquires two or more kobun. It is customary that the first kobun to join the group is designated as having senior status over others who join later. This is recognized by reference to the senior as anibun and the junior as ototobun. — Accordingly, as additional kobun are added to the kumi, a new set of anibun-kobun relationships form. It must be noted, however, that this rule of seniority based upon date of membership is sometimes neglected by an oyabun who may desire to exercise his prerogative of preferential treatment.

Although the anibun-ototobun relationships have less functional significance for the system than the oyabun-kobun relations, the importance of the anibun's role increases as the size of the kumi increases. That is, as the group becomes too large for a single oyabun to maintain the requisite personal and face-to-face relationships with each of his kobun, some of the supervisory functions and authority are delegated

to the anibun. It is possible also that eventually the oyabun may reward an enterprising anibun by arranging to have him become an independent oyabun and offering some of his kobun to the appointee.

In general, there are two ways in which anibun-ototobun relationships are initiated. The first is more typical and is the one previously discussed. It is a type in which both parties are kobun to the same oyabun — the seniority relationship becoming automatic and really incidental to the main purpose of becoming a kobun. The other way anibun-ototobun relationships may form is to bring together two kobun who technically belong to a different oyabun's kumi. It may be said that this type of relationship is not an incidental one, but is formed with certain objectives in mind. One such purpose is to establish an interlocking system of kumi roughly analogous to interlocking directorships in corporations. When a given kumi has established a net work of relations with other kumi by such tactics, it forms a strengthened coalition with respect to both "outside" laborers not belonging to any member kumi and the management of the employing company or companies. Another purpose for forming these relations between kobun originally belonging to different oyabun is to provide for the "adoption" of an "orphan" kobun, so to speak. As intimated previously, because of the inherent vicissitudes of economic and personal life, many oyabun are not able to stay in business, and the kobun often find their way into other kumi through adoption.

4. O-oyabun - magobun relationships. This "grandfather-grandchild" type of relationship in the kumi system seems to be less regular and patterned than either of the two preceding types. This seems to be the case because the relationship is not as vital to the inner solidarity of the kumi as the others. It must be kept in mind that the primary bonds of loyalties in the kumi system exist between the oyabun and the kobun, and where other loyalties — such as the o-oyabun-magobun dyad — are in conflict with the oyabun-kobun tie, the latter must give way. In the practical case however, there are many varying circumstances by which the bonds and relationships between the o-oyabun and the magobun are made strong, weak, or practically non-existent. Specific cases will be given in the sections that follow, but some of the variations are worthy of mention. Personal as well as situational factors may enter into the different cases. In the former case, a given o-oyabun may send his actual son to work for his kobun (perhaps at first as an apprentice and later as a kobun). When this son becomes a kobun and with his master already an oyabun, there automatically forms an o-oyabun-magobun dyad. In this particular kind of relationship, then, the real father-son relation coincides with the o-oyabun-magobun relationship of the kumi system, and hence the bonds between the two are apt to be particularly strong.

Situational factors also affect the relations between the o-oyabun-magobun dyad. It seems fairly clear that where the practicing o-oyabun is in business in the same community or locality as the magobun's kumi

the "grandfather-grandchild" type of relationship would tend to be stronger than if they were not. In such situations, the opportunities for face-to-face contact and for giving and receiving advice and aid are great. However, this is not to imply that where distance separates the two individuals concerned, there are no relationships of importance. It often happens that magobun are forced to seek a temporary job elsewhere and one of the best means of accomplishing this is to "exploit" an o-oyabun who may be doing business in another locality.

5. Ojibun-kobun relationships. Finally, the patterns which typify the relations of the kobun and the ojibun (uncle status) must be mentioned. This relationship is probably the most tenuous of all the dyadic relationships of the kumi system because the ojibun status seems to be, so to speak, a catch-all, a residual category. Persons who are brought into the kumi group in this status are most often individuals who seek employment primarily on the basis of particularly close kinship or special friendship ties with the oyabun. They present a special problem to the oyabun: if he accepts them into the group, he must consider them as due a position above that of the ordinary workers (i.e., the kobun) and yet it is plain that he cannot assign them to a status equal to his because this would endanger or threaten his position. If he is to hire these persons, he must invariably give them an intermediate (if in name only) or innocuous status. Such is the position of the ojibun. For this reason, it seems the relations between the kobun and the ojibun are potentially conflicting.

Thus, in those concrete situations where the ojibun, because of previous work experience and evidence of ability, contribute to the efforts and goals of the kumi, the relationship between the kobun and ojibun, no doubt, results in a workable and, sometimes, respectable and cooperative relationship. However, in the case where the ojibun has no special ability or inclination to perform his duties well, it is likely that the relationship between the kobun and ojibun are a continual source of strain, as will be seen in the case studies presented in the next section.

There remains one other way in which an ojibun-kobun dyad may be formed. This occurs when an oyabun forms a "brotherhood" relationship (kyodaibun) with an oyabun of another kumi. In such cases, the oyabun of the second kumi are ojibun to the kobun of the first kumi. The relationships between the ojibun and kobun in this case are not important, since they do not belong to the same kumi. Their relationships are incidental to the loyalties and obligations of the primary oyabun-kobun ties within each of the respective kumi.

III. SECONDARY ORGANIZATIONS

This section will consist of a description of three common types of organizations of the labor boss system which possessing social relations networks which exceed in size and complexity those within the primary kumi group. These larger organizations will be known as "secondary organizations" and they include the "dormitory group", the "kumi clique", and the "kumi council". The first is an organization composed of both kumi and non-kumi workers and their family members who room and board at a common establishment; the second is an informally organized group composed of close oyabun associates and their respective kumi members; and, finally, the third is a formally organized association of kumi with relevant officials delegated to fulfill certain institutionalized functions of the association. It must be noted, however, that for any given plant, enterprise, district or any of the subdivisions in which the labor boss system is a characteristic system of employment, all of these secondary organizations will not necessarily be found.

A. The Dormitory Group¹⁷

¹⁷ This case is based upon the field reports of Mr. Koichi Bai and his associates of the Faculty of Law, Tokyo University. Mr. Bai was a part-time member of the Public Opinion and Sociological Research Division both during and following this investigation. The study was made in October 1947 and the materials presented reflect the situation prior to the implementation of various reform measures of the Occupation to eliminate the labor boss system. All proper names, including place names, used in this case study have been changed in an attempt to protect the anonymity of the persons concerned.

1) Background of the Sano Hamba. Toward the end of 1946, the Kogyo Company was one of three large construction enterprises engaged in digging a series of tunnels through the mountains in Fukushima Prefecture. These tunnels were constructed for the purpose of feeding water from a nearby lake into the local irrigation canals. Mr. Sakai, an executive of the Company, was sent to this location to establish a branch office and to begin the operations for the Company. He assembled a group of six labor suppliers who, in turn, were commissioned to recruit the laborers necessary for the job. Among these labor suppliers was Mr. Sano, the principal oyabun under consideration in this case study.

The occupational history of Sano is interesting because it illustrates the importance of personal relationships in the hiring and recruiting practices of this type of enterprise. At the time he was called to the present job, Sano was 46 years old. He began his career in this trade as a ditch-digger at the age of 15. His work experience was principally in railroad and dam construction works. When he was 27, he was promoted from the grade of a common laborer to that of a kobun of one of Sakai's kobun (i.e., Sano was a magobun -- grandchild-status -- of Sakai). Later when Sano was working at the Omi Army Base (1941-1944),

he was invited to become a direct kobun of Sakai, thus being promoted to a full-fledged oyabun of the workers he had recruited. When Sakai was given the present position in the Kogyo Company, Sano was asked again to be one of Sakai's labor suppliers.

Sano's basic formula for describing his relations with Sakai and others working on this particular operation can be summarized in this statement:

"The Kogyo Company is a family and the chief of the sub-branch (Sakai), is the father. We, the workers, are the children and I am the eldest son among them."

From Sakai's and the Company's point of view, to have a labor supplier like Sano as a kobun seems to have certain advantages. Sakai explained it in this manner:

"When I give out jobs or materials, I give Sano the poorest one of the lot because he is my (direct) kobun, whereas others are not. Kobun are supposed to take the poorest. It is a mistake for them to expect to be given the best in a given situation. One cannot become a kobun if he thinks thus. When a non-kobun works ten hours, the kobun should work twelve. In this light, it may seem that there is no advantage to the oyabun-kobun relationship. However, in exchange, when others are not working, the oyabun (meaning Sakai) looks after the welfare of his kobun ["mendo wo mite yaru"]."

18 But there seems to be more to it than this. In the calculation of the contracted price to the various labor bosses, it is noteworthy that Sakai paid Sano at a higher rate per unit of work than any other labor boss on this project.

Sakai continued to add to his argument:

"Once a person is made a kobun, he works hard, even without profit or immediate gain. Although he may be given permission to seek work elsewhere, he seldom does so. Even if he does, he comes back when ordered to do so."

This seems to be the case with Sano, as can be seen from the fact of his continuing employment relationship with Sakai.

Sano's loyalty to Sakai is, however, not without benefits. He is the most important of all Sakai's labor suppliers at this base. In the thirty years or more that he has worked in such an occupation, he has risen steadily and has had a modicum of job security through the years as the result of his oyabun-kobun ties with Sakai. Sano himself is said to have throughout the country about 100 workers who have been at one time or another his kobun and who constitute a pool of laborers he may "count upon" to a greater or lesser degree, if the need arises. Although, by definition, he is still a laborer, in his own eyes he has achieved status among his colleagues and has acquired certain technical skills as

well as managerial ability of which he is proud. Most certainly he has prestige in his community, he exercises considerable control over his workers' technical roles as well as their private lives, he enjoys a fairly comfortable living (a living standard perhaps comparable to a lower-middle class Japanese), and his remuneration, though equalled by skilled factory workers, is perhaps compensated for in that he has a greater degree of independence.

2) Establishment of the Sano Hamba.¹⁹ At the time of the study,

¹⁹ The term hamba (literally, an "eating place") refers both to the building (s) where laborers board and the group which normally sleep at this place. In a sense, the term is used like the Japanese term ie (house) which refers both to the building where the family is housed and to the social group which resides in that structure. Other Japanese terms roughly equivalent in function to the hamba are: nimpu-beya (coolie-room), naya (shed or barn), doko-beya (laborers' room). The name of a particular hamba is known by the name of the manager (i.e., the cyabun); hence the phrase "Sano Hamba" means a hamba which is operated, but not necessarily owned, by a Mr. Sano. In the present case the buildings of the hamba were owned by the Kogyo Company.

Sano's dormitory group was composed of the following members: a) his kumi (primary group) of nine individuals including himself; b) a secondary group of 39 laborers not formally inducted into the kumi and therefore not related by oyabun-kobun ties; and c) a tertiary group of about 24 family members (wives and children) of the above-mentioned members.

It is significant to note that none of the kumi members and most of the non-kumi laborers were not recruited from the immediate district where the present job was taking place. It becomes clear in such a case that some kind of housing must be provided these men. In the present case, the Kogyo Company furnished the housing and some very rudimentary kitchen utensils, bedding, and furniture. Thus, it is from the necessity to work together and to share the common living facilities that the elements of a microcosmic social system develop. This is the basis of the social organization of the dormitory group.

3) Recruiting of workers. As a labor supplier, Sano had the solo responsibility for securing laborers for this construction job. As mentioned previously, in October 1947 his working crew consisted of eight kumi members and some 39 non-kumi laborers. No doubt, Sano would have liked to have included more of the non-kumi workers as his kobun, but because of the financial obligations of oyabunship, he felt that the eight were all he could afford under the circumstances. The following, TABLE III, is a list of the primary means by which the kumi members were hired:²⁰

²⁰ For the sake of simplicity, the kumi members will not be identified by name.

TABLE III: THE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS BY WHICH
SAHO GUMI MEMBERS WERE RECRUITED

- Ojibun A: the eldest son of the oyabun
- Ojibun B: the younger brother of oyabun
- Ojibun C: the brother of oyabun's wife
- Ojibun D: a special skilled worker who
was recommended by ojibun B
- Kobun A: a kobun who had worked for the
oyabun for the past eight years.
- Kobun B: a skilled worker who had been
recommended by ojibun B.
- Kobun C: a skilled worker recommended
by ojibun C.
- Kobun D: a skilled worker recommended
by one of the oyabun's friends
in the labor supply business.

How the 39 non-kumi workers were hired is indicated in TABLE IV.

TABLE IV: THE MEANS BY WHICH NON-KUMI WORKERS
OF SAHO HALDA WERE RECRUITED

- a) workers who were introduced by the oyabun's previous
kobun who were not working with him on this project.. 14
- b) workers who were introduced by Kobun A 6
- c) workers who were introduced by people hired in the
two preceding categories (a and b) 6
- d) workers who were hired by self-introduction 12
- e) workers whose recommendation and "connections"
are unknown 1

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A month or so previous to the study, the oyabun had an additional group of 31 farmers who worked for him on a temporary basis. This group was recruited by virtue of the fact they had previously worked for him on another project.

It is interesting to note that out of the original 80 workers (including the 31 part-time laborers), all, except for 12, were hired because of some previous relationship, either on the bases of actual kinship, oyabun-kobun ties, or friendship. It is evident then that the majority of the workers were recruited on a particularistic basis -- it is "who one knows, rather than what one knows" that counts in this system. Indeed, anxiety over the hiring of the 12 workers who came by self-introduction was expressed by the senior kobun (Kobun A):

"Many of them (the 12 workers) are skilled workers and they work very hard, but because they come to work "lightly" (meaning no obligations to any kumi member or his friend), they have a tendency to skip jobs whenever they feel like it. We must take precautions against this".

4) The kumi, the primary group of the Sano Hamba. The social and occupational activities of the Sano Hamba (dormitory group) were directed and administered by a smaller organization, the kumi. This kumi, as was stated previously, had nine members: the oyabun, four ojibun and four kobun. This organization, of course, was formally established by means of the induction ceremony described in part II of this report. In general, practically all important matters from supervision and rules of discipline in work to the satisfaction of food, housing, financial, and recreational needs of the dormitory group was largely controlled by this kumi. However, this statement must be modified to some extent. There was recognized within the kumi a smaller unit which was called the kambu (roughly "a personal administrative staff").²¹ The kambu was composed

²¹ As will be seen in the concluding section, this "personal administrative staff" refers to a managerial organization of the hamba when seen in the light of its occupational functions.

of the four ojibun and the senior kobun, but it excluded Kobun B, C, and D. The reasons for excluding the last three kobun seem to be that they were appointed by the oyabun on the basis of their work ability in the tunneling operations, and not for their managerial qualifications; hence they are, so to speak, technicians, rather than administrative aids. The oyabun stated that these skilled men were given formal kobun status by way of "insurance" for keeping them on the job.²² It might be well to

²² This is an interesting case illustrating the flexibility in the diffuse and personalistic boss system for recognizing purely technical, functionally specific qualifications. However, these qualifications are included within the special norms of the system, i.e., by giving them formal kobun status their loyalty and sense of obligation is appealed to.

discuss the background and roles of the individuals mentioned above because they touch upon many spheres of the hamba life.

Within the kumi organization, the chief was Sano, the oyabun. Not only was he the responsible person for recruiting and selecting laborers for this project, but he was also the principal coordinator of the group

once it was established. His role may be categorically divided into two aspects: a) his "representative" role as the chief spokesman for the dormitory group; and b) his "managerial" role as the main coordinator of activities within the group.

As the representative of the Hamba, his relations with the employer (the Kogyo Company) and with the other five hamba managers were the most significant. Because this latter aspect is described in the later pages of Part II, at this point only his role with regard to the employer requires discussion. Although the Kogyo Company had its own representative for checking the progress of work for each hamba group, this representative served merely as the "eyes and ears" of the Company and he had no power to order or direct any changes in the manner in which the oyabun was carrying on the operations. All official contacts between the Company and the hamba were channeled through the oyabun, and if suggestions for change by the employer were made about the hamba operations, it was the oyabun's prerogative to accept or reject them. This degree of independence on the part of the oyabun is illustrated by the fact that in spite of independent check by the Company's representative on each hamba's progress of the tunneling operations, there occurred a juggling of the official progress figures at the end of month by the oyabun of the six hamba and the Company's local inspector collaborating together.²³ More

²³ The remarkable independence of the oyabun described above highlights an important general characteristic of Japanese social relations, called by Lederer, "coordinate authority" (Lederer, 1938, p.165). That is, in any task, powers and assignments are distributed among separate groups, who tend to have supremacy in their delegated sphere, and are themselves tightly knit, familistic groups.

specific duties of the oyabun were concerned with the submitting of the monthly progress reports, the receiving of wages for the entire hamba group, the payment of provisions and goods received (food, fuel, certain items of clothing, which at the time of the survey was largely rationed by the government), and requisitioning work tools and supplies.

As the chief expert of the tunneling operations for the hamba, it was the oyabun's responsibility to see that his technical orders were followed. He spent considerable time, therefore, in the inspection of the operations, and he was not averse to handling the drills or shovels of individual workers to show them how the particular job could be done better. He kept himself informed on the working efficiency of the workers, scolding those who were careless, praising those who were satisfactory and rewarding those who were particularly capable with an "incentive payment" which was usually between two and five percent of the particular day's wages.

Other than these technical and occupational roles, the oyabun had certain obligations pertaining to his kobun and ojibun. He mediated in quarrels between a kobun and his wife, he looked for a likely spouse for

an unmarried kobun, he purchased gifts or gave money on special holidays (as New Years' and the O-bon), gave them parties when he thought they needed such recreation, loaned them money, and called for a doctor and personally massaged the back of a sick kobun. In the case of one ojibun (his brother-in-law) who had twelve dependents living with him, the oyabun paid for the food expenses which the ojibun's monthly wage did not cover.

With regard to those workers who were not his kobun, his obligations and responsibilities were, of course, less. He did not provide help in times of illness, nor did he loan money, unless it was under special circumstances. All workers, except the five married ones with dependents living at the hamba, were housed in one large room attached to the oyabun's quarters. The oyabun was responsible for the boarding of these men and he appointed his wife and hired a cook for this work. The fact that these men were housed in a dormitory attached to his quarters also made it convenient to keep a watchful eye over those who were ill and those feigning illness in order to avoid work. In short, the oyabun's disciplining the workers took place not only at the place of work, but also in their dormitories.

As part of the oyabun's personal administrative staff (kambu), there were the four ojibun. A brief account of their background and residence in the hamba is given below in TABLE V.

TABLE V: BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OJIBUN OF SANO GUMI

- Ojibun A: age 22; eldest son of oyabun; unmarried; about two years of work experience in this type of occupation; has a room next to the oyabun's quarters.
- Ojibun B: age 34; younger brother of oyabun; married; about three years of work experience; has separate living quarters in the hamba.
- Ojibun C: age 40; brother-in-law of oyabun; married; has 11 children and relatives living in the hamba; about three years of work experience.
- Ojibun D: age 42; no kinship relations to oyabun; marital status unknown; about eight years of work experience; lives in separate quarters in the hamba.

In their occupational roles, these ojibun were known as the sewayaki or sewanin (manager or organizer). Their principal duties in the tunneling operations were to act as "straw bosses" of the four work groups. They received instructions from the oyabun as to what workers were to be

assigned to them each day and they saw to it that these workers arrived on the job. They were responsible for the direction of the detailed operations in the tunnels. Three of the four scwayaki, however, were less experienced in these operations than were some of their subordinates.²⁴

²⁴ These were the ojibun who were appointed primarily because of their kinship relations to the oyabun. The question may arise as to why the oyabun did not appoint them as kobun. Sano, the oyabun, explained it in this manner: "I cannot let them (the three ojibun) do any ordinary work, for if I do, it would violate my feelings of jingi (benevolence, integrity)."

Hence on any important decisions concerning the work, these three tended to consult the kobun who happened to be working on that team for the day.

The status of the four scwayaki was somewhat ambiguous and strained. This was in part due to the fact that both the oyabun and the senior kobun were constantly interfering in the supervision of the workers under them. Moreover, while the oyabun and the senior kobun had the authority to reward the workers with tangible "incentive payments" and bonuses, the ojibun had no such authority. They had to depend largely upon their personal status (e.g., older age and closer relations to the oyabun) and such negative sanctions as scolding, humiliation, sarcasm, and even physical blows. In this respect, they behaved like the typical non-commissioned officers of the former Japanese army.

The last, but not the least, important member of the kambu (personal administrative staff), was the senior kobun who was previously identified as kobun A. He began his apprenticeship in this occupation when he was 14 years old. At the time of the study he was 36 years old, so he had accumulated some 20 years of experience. He had worked with the present oyabun for eight years, and undoubtedly because of the satisfactory oyabun-kobun relationship, he was given an important position in the dormitory group. He seemed proud of his position and confided to the investigator that he was the "right arm" of the oyabun and the "hamba couldn't get along" without him. Kobun A's occupational roles were designated by these three titles and functions:

Dezura choba (time-keeper). As such, he made regular inspection trips around the hamba to check on the attendance and time cards of all workers three times a day and made out the rather complicated pay schedules at the end of each month.

Naikin choba (bookkeeper). Though this role is related to the above, there was considerable amount of other bookkeeping work that was required for keeping the accounts on work tools, supplies and repairs as well as for provisions, work clothes, cigarettes, and rice-wine rations which the oyabun purchased for the hamba members.

Dainin choba (representative of the master). This was his title

for the role of deputy oyabun which he possessed in addition to the above mentioned duties.

A proper term for the combination of these roles is sewayaki, but this title was not used (except on his happi jacket) probably because it conflicted with those of the ojibun who were called sewayaki, and because of the formal deference he paid to the latter's age and close kinship relations with the oyabun. The junior kobun called him "aniki" or "anikibun" (older brother status).

Such a combination of duties and roles obviously gave him considerable influence in the hamba. In his kumi relations, for example, it was the standard practice for the other kobun -- when they needed to borrow money, to take a vacation, or to seek special advice from the oyabun -- to "clear it" first with the senior kobun.

The remaining members of the kumi were the three junior kobun previously designated as kobun B, C, and D. Their roles were not defined as part of the oyabun's personal administrative system (i.e., they were not kambu members). They were selected on the basis of their technical qualifications and were made kobun because the oyabun felt that their loyalty and perseverance would be enhanced. Because of this work experience and knowledge, they were the ones most frequently consulted by the team leaders. Their position in the kumi, however, was recognized. In contrast with other workers, they received special privileges (better food, higher pay, and more consideration in times of illness), and they wore brown happi jackets like those of the senior kobun, while non-kobun workers wore dark blue jackets.

5) Organization of the Work. It will be recalled that the primary operations of the Kogyo Company were concerned with the excavating of a series of tunnels for an irrigation system in one local district of Fukushima Prefecture. The chief of the local branch, Sakai, had brought together six labor suppliers who each managed a dormitory group. Sano, the labor boss of the hamba that is being examined here, had contracted with the Kogyo Company for the excavation of part of tunnels number 4 and 5. Of these tunnels, Sano agreed to be responsible for 62 percent of tunnel 4 and 73 percent of tunnel 5.²⁵ This excavation began in October

²⁵ Unfortunately, due to an excess of water seepage, the work on tunnel 5 was stopped in October 1947.

1946, so when the present study was made, Sano's group had completed about a year's work on this operation. Thus, the pattern of work relationships here described can be said to be fairly stabilized and typical.

For one six month period, Sano's hamba group had completed about 300 meters in tunnel 4 and about 500 meters in tunnel 5. Thus the average monthly progress for the Sano Hamba was about 130 meters. For cost accounting purposes, the contract price for this excavation work was computed on the basis of the total number of ryubi (one cubic meter of dirt).

excavated during one month. Since the forward wall of each tunnel was about 5.5 square meters, the total number of ryubi was the product of this 5.5 square meters and the length of the tunnel extended during the month. The actual payment received by the labor boss from the Company was computed at so many Yen per ryubi, which varied somewhat for each of the six dormitory-groups. The rationale for this differential payment seemed to be that some tunnels required more time and work because of differences in the mineral composition of the tunnel walls. Sano, in September, was paid at the rate of ¥280 per ryubi (in 1947, the official exchange rate was ¥150 to one U.S. dollar). The daily progress for his group varied between 3.5 and 5.5 running meters with an average of about 4 meters. Hence the basic income of the Sano dormitory group was about ¥6,160 or about \$41.²⁶ There are, of course, many other complicating

²⁶ This was computed by the following method. The average daily ryubi was 22 (i.e., 5.5 square meters times 4 running meters) and the payment was based upon the rate of ¥280 per ryubi. Hence, ¥280 times 22 ryubi equals ¥6,160.

factors involved in the wage system, but no further explanation need be given here because this matter will be taken up in detail later.

At the time of the study, there were about 39 non-kobun laborers in the Sano dormitory group.²⁷ These were divided into four teams with

²⁷ Thirty-one laborers had in the previous month returned to their principal occupation, farming, and are not included in the above number.

variable membership of from eight to ten laborers each. The number on the teams varied because of sickness and other reasons. In an eight man team, for example, there were usually the team leader (the sawayaki), two "drillers" (usually kobun) who did the dynamiting, and five "carriers" (common laborers) who carted away the dirt, rocks, and debris after each blast. Other laborers not assigned to a specific work team were the blacksmith, the scaffolding constructor, and a mechanic. Their duties were the repairing of tools, reinforcing the walls of the tunnel with timber to prevent cave-ins, and operating special machines such as the water pump and the ventilators used to remove dust and smoke after the dynamiting.

A complete cycle of work from the drilling of the holes for dynamiting to carting away the debris on hand-pushed carts after the explosion was known as the happa. The group leader and two drillers would begin the happa by digging about 20 holes some 2.5 meters into the forward wall of the tunnel. Because there were only two rock drills on this project, it took about four hours to drill the required number of holes. When they were finished with this operation, the same men filled the holes with TNT and set the fuse, taking an additional three hours. After the blast was set off, at least half an hour was needed to clear away the

smoke and dust from the tunnel. After this, the five or six "carriers", using picks and shovels, would appear and remove the dirt. This last step required about $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours to complete. Thus, the work cycle of one happa took about 12 hours. However, since the drilling operations could be carried on while carriers were taking out the debris from the previous blast, some overlapping of the steps was possible. When this was done, each happa took only about nine or ten hours.

With the absence of the 31 temporary laborers (farmers) at the time of the survey, the Sano dormitory group was hard pressed to complete on schedule their part of the contracted work. The men were forced to work in a constant stream of shifts, and the digging continued late into the night. The laborers arranged their sleep and meals in between their respective shifts. For instance, one day in September a laborer worked from 6 to 10 AM, ate lunch and rested, and then worked again from 2 to 8 PM.

It is interesting to note in passing that the system of direct control in the hands of the oyabun was reinforced by his periodic shifting of laborers from one team to another so that no one person would eventually challenge their position or authority by controlling one team. It was the oyabun, with the aid of the senior kobun, who decided on which team a given laborer was to work for the day.

6) The wage system. The wage system of the Sano Hamba was an extremely complicated affair. Although technically the laborers were employees of the Kogyo Company, the oyabun was the final authority as to the amount and the manner in which these wages were to be allocated to them. Because of this fact, wage payments must be considered in two parts: a) what the oyabun received from the company; and b) what he paid out to individual workers.

In TABLE VI is a brief outline of the various kinds of payments the oyabun received from the Company:

TABLE VI: TYPES OF PAYMENTS MADE TO OYABUN BY THE KOGYO COMPANY

- 1) Base Pay (payments made to the oyabun and based upon the number of cubic meter of tunnel - ryubi - excavated by the dormitory group, less the cost of dynamite used and the cost of tool repairing. Previous to September 1947, these payments were calculated at the rate of ¥250 per cubic meter; in September, at ¥280 per cubic meter; and in October, at ¥540 per cubic meter. This variability, no doubt, reflected the general inflationary trend of the post-war period.)
- 2) Incentive Payments (graduated payments according to amount of work accomplished for the month by the dormitory group as a whole. For example, in September, the oyabun received ¥16,000 on this account.)
- 3) Traditional Bonus (customary but variable payments made in mid-year and year-end periods. No information on the actual amount was obtained.)

TABLE VI (continued)

- 4) Advance (loans made to the oyabun and nominally to be deducted from future payments for work.)
- 5) Payments in Kind (payments or benefices made in the form of work clothes, food, fuel, and other similar items of daily necessity.)

Of these five types of payments, only the first two ("base pay" and "incentive payments") were of the rationally calculable type of payments. The remaining type of payments seems to be more closely associated with "benefices" or "largess" which were discussed previously. But whatever the intent may have been for having such a complicated system of payments, one thing seems certain. That is, the pay system was flexible enough so that in no case would an oyabun of one of the six dormitory groups receive less than the amount required to cover his hamba expenses. When the "base pay" and the "incentive payments" were not sufficient to meet current expenses, there were the flexible "traditional bonuses", the "payments in kind" and "advances" which would make up the deficits. Of these three, the "advances" were the most important. According to Sano, "When red-ink figures (deficits) appear, we only have to inform the Company. They will lend us money without any receipt or security and they will not say anything if we cannot pay them back."

The exact amount of payments which Sano received from the Kogyo Company was not ascertained by the field researchers. However, from the incidental information they received some crude estimates for the month of September 1947 on certain "tangible" payments can be made. In TABLE VII, below, these estimates are given. No figures on the "payments in kind" could be given here but it is known that there were no "traditional bonus" and "advance" payments made for this month. It is to be noted that the housing facilities of the dormitory group were provided by the Company rent-free.

TABLE VII: ESTIMATED CASH INCOME OF THE OYABUN
OF SANO HAMBA FOR SEPTEMBER 1947

Gross Cash Income:

Base Pay	¥182,000
Incentive Payments	¥ 16,000
Traditional Bonus	---
Advance	---
Total gross cash income	¥198,000

Less Operating Expenses:

Cost of dynamite	¥ 3,000
Cost of tool repairs	<u>11,000</u>
Total operating expenses	¥ 14,000

Net Operating Income * ¥184,000

* This means the money which the oyabun received to pay wages, cost of board, incentive payments, entertainment expenses, and other benefices (e.g., loans, payments in kind.) for his hamba group.

Let us consider next how the oyabun distributed these payments received from the Kogyo Company. Like the payments made to the oyabun from the Company, the means by which the workers received their pay were numerous. The following (TABLE VIII) is a classification of various types of wages received by the workers.

TABLE VIII: TYPES OF WAGE PAYMENTS MADE TO
WORKERS OF THE SANO HAMBA

- 1) Salary: All the members of the kambu -- (i.e., the senior kobun and the four ojibun) received a monthly salary.
- 2) Wages: All non-kobun workers were paid according to the number of work cycles (happa) each participated in during the month. For September "drillers" received ¥70 per happa, and "carriers" received ¥60 per happa.
- 3) Perquisites: These include the free lodging for dormitory workers, free board for the kobun and their family, partial payment of board for the ojibun and their families.
- 4) Daily Incentive Wages: These were the special "bonus" given to a worker who was found to be doing good work on a particular day. These "bonuses" amounted to two to five percent of that day's base wages.

TABLE VIII (continued)

- 5) Monthly Bonus: These bonuses (sometimes referred to as "pocket money") were based upon the "incentive payments" which the oyabun received from the Company. In September this amounted to ¥16,000 and was distributed among the workers according to the oyabun's evaluation of the individual worker ("lazy" or "diligent") and according to the total number of happa (work cycles) which he worked. The "diligent" workers received about ¥17 per happa, while the "lazy" workers received ¥15 per happa.
- 6) Traditional Bonus: These customary payments are given at the mid-year and New Year's holiday season.
- 7) Payments in Kind: These include many "benefice" payments such as working clothes, footwear, fuel for married workers living in separate quarters, and the like.
- 8) Advances: Loans made to workers without interest.

In TABLE IX is presented a crude estimate of the cash payments the oyabun made to his workers. The "salaries" were figures obtained by direct interviews. The "wages" and other payments were estimated on the basis of the total number of happa units (1,060) credited to the laborers.

7) Working conditions. ~~About nine months after the present study was made and after the Japanese Government's program to eliminate the labor boss system was under way, Sano's hamba group — like thousands of others — came under the scrutiny of government officials. The following report, filed by the Labor Inspector of the local Employment Security Office, cites some of the harsh disciplinary methods used by the oyabun and his kambu. This report stated the Sano Gumi was charged with the following "criminal acts":~~

"Re Yoshitake. Upon Yoshitake's return from a trip home, he was told by the ojibun to begin work immediately on that night. He replied to this order by saying, I will begin work early tomorrow morning, so please excuse me from work tonight.

"The request was turned down and instead he was held by his hair and pushed to the door of the dormitory. At the door he was hit a countless (sic) number of times with a wooden clog (geta). In this tussle, he was hurt on his left arm and right leg and a scar and a bruise remain. As a result of this incident, he pulled together his belongings and attempted to leave the hamba. He was caught by another ojibun and again was pulled by the hair and struck five or six times Later, he attempted to escape again, and this time was discovered in the attempt by the oyabun's wife and a second ojibun.

TABLE IX. ESTIMATED WAGE AND OTHER PAYMENTS MADE TO
SANO HALIBA WORKERS IN SEPTEMBER 1947

Balance of payments received from Kogyo Company (see TABLE VIII) ¥184,000

Expenditures of the oyabun:

Salary:

1 Senior Kobun	¥ 3,000
4 Ojibun (or Sawayaki)	<u>8,000</u>

Total Salary payments	¥11,000
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<u>Wages</u> (for 43 drillers and carriers)	42,000 *
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Cost of Perquisites:

1 Senior Kobun	¥ 3,500
4 Ojibun	8,000
4 Kobun	8,000
5 Married non-kobun workers	5,000
34 Single non-kobun workers	<u>34,000</u>

Total-estimated perquisite expenses	¥58,500
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<u>Daily Incentive Payment</u>	5,000
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<u>Monthly Bonus</u>	<u>16,000</u>
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Total cost of expenditures	<u>132,000</u>
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<u>Balance used for "payments in kind", "traditional bonus", "advances", and other benefices</u>	<u>¥ 51,500</u>
--	-----------------

* This amount is underestimated by about 40 percent because the oyabun withheld about 40 percent of each worker's pay to cover partial cost of board and lodging maintenance for the laborers.

"Re Inoue. On 22 July 1948, Inoue first arrived at the Sano Hamba. He worked for two days and wanted to quit because of the extremely hard work. When he approached the oyabun on this, he was told that he was a "sissy" (ikuji nashi) and was struck on his forehead. However, eventually he succeeded in escaping (forfeiting his pay, of course).

"Re Fujita. Fujita went to a nearby town to see a movie. On the next day, because he felt sleepy, he didn't wish to work. He was caught napping in the dormitory by the ojibun and was struck in the head and face 15 or 16 times.

"Re Hara. Hara received a telegram from his father in Yokosuka to return home immediately. However, the oyabun never relayed the telegram to him. Hara must have found out about this later. When he approached the oyabun about this telegram, he was told by the oyabun, 'I know by my experience with Hirai, Ihara, Yamamoto, and others, that this was a trick to escape this hamba. One of their friends would stage a successful escape and later he would send a telegram requesting me to release their friends who remain.... This is an old trick and I, who employ many men, am wise to it.' In this way, Hara was not permitted to leave the hamba."

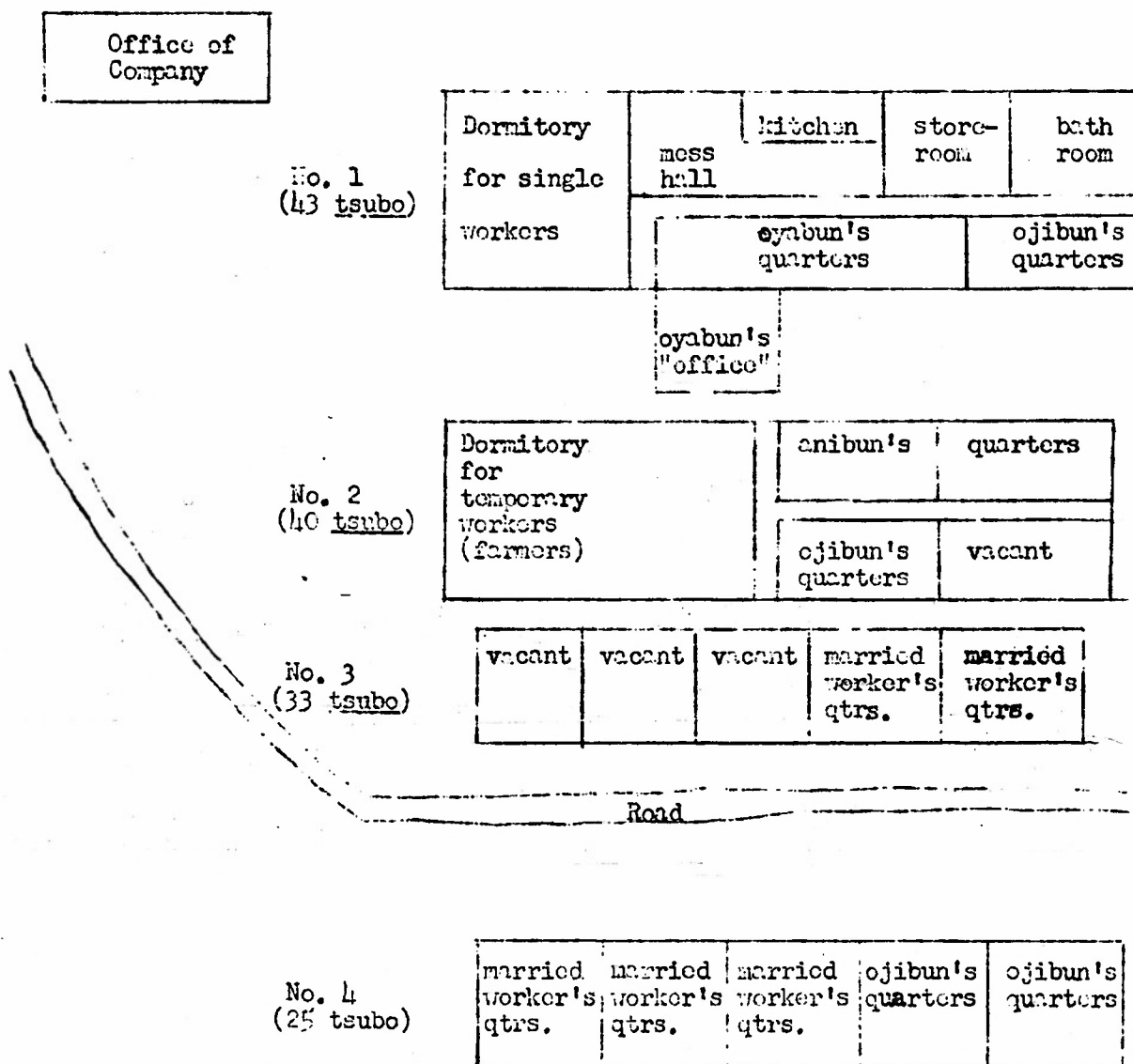
Aside from the methods of discipline and control over laborers, the conditions at the place of work were severe. The men were forced to work in a cold, damp, close and crowded space in the tunnel. The tunnels were dug about 2.4 meters wide and 2.3 meters high. Electric lamps were placed 50 meters apart along the tunnel, but they were inadequate and the laborers had to carry oil lamps to find their way about. Water seepage was a constant menace and the laborer's poor quality tabi were problems. Electric fans were used to improve ventilation, but these were insufficient. Occasionally, auxiliary ventilation shafts had to be dug to clear away the smoke and bring in fresh air.

Moreover, the men were hard pushed to do their work as quickly as possible. The motivations of the oyabun to push his workers as much as he could were clear. The more his men dug in a day, the greater was his profit and less was his expense. His profits would be increased by the fact that he would receive greater "standard wages" and greater "incentive payments." His unit costs would be lower because his basic cost of feeding workers would be relatively uniform from one day to another irrespective of whether the laborers worked or not. Thus, though the workers are paid a greater amount for more work units accomplished, the oyabun gains proportionately more.

These three aspects of the working conditions of the Dormitory Group — the rough and arbitrary use of force for maintaining discipline, the physical conditions of work, and the economic motivations of the oyabun — all took place in the physical and social environment of the hamba. The details of this environment will be considered next.

8) Dormitory Facilities. The physical plant of the four separate dwelling units of the Sano Hamba is represented in Figure I. The company

FIG. 1: A MAP OF THE DOMITORIES OF SANO HAMBA



1 tsubo - 3.3 square meters.

NB - This map is not drawn to scale.

provided these buildings as well as the rudimentary kitchen wares, mats, bedding, and a few pieces of furniture. It is to be noted that the oyabun and the senior kobun were provided with two rooms each, while married laborers were provided with only one room each. Furthermore, the dormitory for single workers was in the same building as that of the oyabun, a location which made it convenient for the oyabun to keep a watchful eye over his workers.

The furnishings of the quarters of the oyabun and his kambu (senior kobun and ojibun) differed considerably from those of the married laborers and even more so from those of the single laborers. In the oyabun's quarters, for example, there were black-edged tatami (high quality) on the floor, varnished or waxed woodwork, electric lights, hearth lined with sheet copper, and a clean wall and ceiling. In general, it was furnished like the house of a person whose income was much more than that of an average white collar worker in Japan. The married workers' quarters had walls of plain timber, no ceiling but a plain roof, no electricity, and a flooring of half poor-grade tatami and half dirt. The single men's quarters provided no privacy because it was a one-room affair in the same building with the oyabun's quarters. In this one room some 34 workers were crowded together in an area of 12 tsubo (39.6 square meters). Because of the night and day working shifts of the hamba employees, some of those who worked in the day and those who worked in the night slept on the same mats on a rotation basis.

The distribution of food also indicated the wide differences in the privileges of the groups mentioned above. It must be remembered in this regard that at the time of the study (1947) a good deal of the food supply in Japan was rationed. The branch chief, Sakai, acted as the "head of the family" for the purposes of the ration system and through him the oyabun received his allotments. This ration was, of course, supplemented by black market purchases as well as by frequent foraging trips into the farm and fishing villages. Like the distribution of wages, the oyabun had a great deal of personal control over the allocation of food.

However, married workers fared better than unmarried workers in this respect. All married laborers received their basic rations from the oyabun. Records of their purchases were kept and a variable amount depending upon the oyabun's benevolence was deducted from their pay at the end of the month, except for the senior kobun whose total living expenses were paid by the oyabun as a special perquisite. Furthermore, they had separate cooking facilities and some allowance was made for the purchase of supplementary food-stuffs at the local stores.

The situation was quite different for the unmarried workers, ²⁸ who were completely dependent upon the oyabun's wife and her helper²⁸.

²⁸ This person was excluded from the previous tally of the hamba workers because he was not directly concerned with the excavating operations.

decided the menu and cooked the meals. According to the Labor Inspector's report, these single men's meals consisted only of "rice" (with 80 or 90% wheat content) and a bowl of bean paste soup (miso shiru). Within this group of unmarried workers however, the oyabun's wife paid special attention to the unmarried kobun who were fed much better than those who were not kobun.

The following is an example of how the workers were highly dependent upon the oyabun's goodwill in order to maintain economic security for themselves. The first example is Iike, who was a "driller" and who had a wife and two children living with him at the hamba. In September, he was ill for about twelve days and was able to work for only 18 days. Since he did not have any savings he was "advanced" a sum of ¥1,100 to pay the doctor bills. This was paid back at the end of the month when he received his pay. The following is a summary of his expenses and income:

TABLE X. A KOBUN'S STATEMENT OF FAMILY INCOME AND EXPENSES FOR SEPTEMBER 1947

<u>Income:</u>		
Base Pay	¥ 1,686	
Incentive Payment	<u>500</u>	
Total Income:		¥ 2,186
<u>Less Expenses:</u>		
Food	¥ 1,027	
Medicine	20	
Doctor bill	<u>1,100</u>	
Total Expenses:		¥ 2,147
<u>Net Income for the Month</u>		<u>¥ 39</u>

This ¥39 was all that he had left for clothes and for recreational purposes for the ensuing month, but there was the oyabun who could stake him when needs arose.

Another example is that of ojibun C, who supports a family of twelve. His monthly salary is ¥2,000 but, with such a large family, his grocery bill exceeds his salary to the amount of about ¥1,000 each month. This amount, however, is taken care of by the oyabun.

From such examples as these, it is easy to see how the worker's economic security was dependent upon the "benevolence" of the oyabun. The workers were paid a minimum of wages which permitted little surplus after the grocery bills were paid. Additional needs for money such as doctor bills, extra clothing, special recreational expenses and the like

must be borrowed from or "advanced" by the oyabun. From one standpoint, it might be reasoned that since the oyabun did in fact make these "loans" and "gifts" (especially in the case of ojibun C), it may be argued that it would have been simpler for the oyabun to raise the wages of the workers to a level which would be more commensurate with the total wages and benefices he gave. Unfortunately, such a wage policy would controvert one of the fundamental objectives of the labor boss system; namely, the fostering of a state of economic dependence of workers on the oyabun. This is accomplished in large part through restriction of wages. By maintaining such dependence, the oyabun is able to demand and achieve greater personal loyalty from and discipline among his workers. It reinforces his symbolic role of the "father."

9) Sano's Relationships with Other Oyabun Employed by Kogyo Company. In an earlier part of this section, it was stated that there were six labor suppliers operating at this base. In addition to Sano, there were the following oyabun, each with his hamba or dormitory group: Hara, Arashi, Suzuki, Kondo, and Iguchi. Without question, Sano was the most influential figure in this group of oyabun. He called together a monthly meeting to discuss common problems as well as to inform each other on their respective progress in the total excavating operations. One of the interesting aspects of this meeting was the "juggling" of figures on the units of work accomplished by and on the operating expenses of each team. This was probably done in order to minimize any glaring differences between kumi. It seems that Sakai, the local branch chief of the company and the official representative was aware of this but did not take any action to prevent such collusion.

Returning to Sano's relations with other oyabun, his ability to loan money to other oyabun no doubt enhanced his position in the group. According to him, "To lend money to other oyakata (oyabun) is a ginu (duty) of anibun (elder brother - status) among oyakata." But his chief deputy in the hamba put it more bluntly, "If Sano did not think he was their anibun, he would not have loaned them money." Then, too, Sano seems to be the chief channel through which the gripes of the oyabun are relayed to Sakai, the branch chief. But beyond these fairly obvious mechanisms, which places Sano above these of others, are those which characterize the oyabun-kobun system generally. Sano "outranks" each of them for the following reasons:

- a) Hara and Arashi are kobun of one of Sano's ototobun (younger-brother status); hence Sano is their ojibun.
- b) Suzuki is a real younger brother of Sano's ototobun; hence Suzuki has obligatory relations to Sano because of the brother.
- c) Kondo and Iguchi are the most recent kobun of Sakai (the branch chief of the Kogyo Company); hence Sano outranks them by virtue of longer kobunship to Sakai.

This example of the inter-oyabun relations illustrates the way social and economic ties are established between bosses. It is what is

referred to as the "kumi clique" which will be taken up next. To change the scenario, so to speak, we shall examine the kumi clique structure with a case study from another industry.

B. The Kumi Clique and Council

In addition to the dormitory system just described, two other types of secondary organizations are found associated with the labor boss system. One of these is an informal organization which develops out of the various alliances with other similar groups which the oyabun and his kobun seek to form in order to exert influence over as large a group of laborers as possible. This informal combination of oyabun groups shall be referred to here as the "kumi clique." The other type of organization is more formally constituted, and consists of functionaries who have clearly defined "offices" or roles. In general, this organization attempts to regulate and coordinate the interrelations of all kumi in a given establishment or plant. Often, it attempts to place limits upon the number of kobun that an oyabun may acquire and to enforce a set of specialized customs of the group. This type of association will be known as the "kumi council."

Both of these secondary organizations are, in a broad sense, monopolistic combinations in which the leaders attempt to increase their bargaining position with respect to potential employers and other nonmember labor bosses, to place certain restrictions over a large body of laborers, and, perhaps, to further their own economic and political ends.

1) The Kumi Clique. Matsushima has described such groups of oyabun in the coal mining industry:

"In the Kosaka Mines, there were two oyabun, named S— and I— who had under their direct control some 600 or 700 laborers. And in the Hitachi Mines, Y— and Y— (oyabun) controlled some 2000 laborers together." 29

29 Unpublished manuscript, available at the Department of Sociology, Tokyo University.

This type of widespread control over laborers by a few oyabun seems to have been a common phenomenon in Japan, at least until about 1938. Matsushima claims that the system has persisted in mining areas and is likely to continue.

When it is understood that, on the average, the primary oyabun-kobun group consists of less than twenty members, it is necessary to explain how the bosses can extend their influence and power over several hundred laborers. One of the most obvious techniques is to form cliques of oyabun. In general, these cliques may be developed in three ways:

"a) "Natural development". If a given oyabun stays in the business long enough, in time his kobun may become experienced enough to strike

out on their own and acquire kobun for themselves. Thus, for instance, if a given oyabun had ten kobun, each of whom became in later years oyabun of ten kobun, the resulting combination would result in a pool of some 100 kobun and magobun. These kobun and magobun in turn, like those discussed in Part II, would have control of a number of workers under their jurisdiction. Thus, the total number of workers controlled by an oyabun could easily run into the hundreds.

b) "Adoption". Not all labor bosses, of course, are able to maintain themselves in business. They may lack interest, ability, or the personality to do so; or they may be forced to retire by pressure from stronger oyabun. For these and other reasons, they cannot continue to maintain leadership over a group of laborers. In such cases, an aggressive oyabun may "adopt" into his fold the kobun and uninitiated laborers of this unsuccessful oyabun.

c) "Exploitation of friendship and kinship ties". Finally, cliques may be formed through the discreet use of personal and kinship relations of the oyabun and his followers. In this respect, the formation of cliques among labor bosses is probably not very different from the methods used by the financial Zaibatsu.

As an illustration of the use of these methods, a case analyzed by Matsushima may be presented.³⁰ The particular oyabun concerned will be

³⁰ Op.cit.

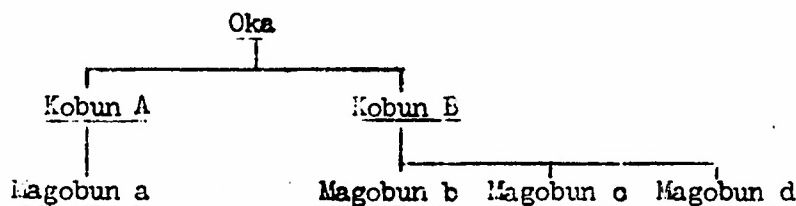
called "Oka".

Oka is an oyabun of a group of miners in a certain mine in Ibaragi Prefecture. Although his formal kumi was composed of only six kobun, he claims to have direct control over 120 of the 500 laborers in one shaft of this mine. In this particularly primitive mining enterprise, there remained some of the traditional attitudes governing the relationship between the boss and his workers. As a result, Oka held a very high position in the inter-kumi association and was regarded as a powerful oyabun by most workers of the mine. In the election of 1945, for instance, he was elected as a member of the village council when he ran for office in competition with a labor union leader. The necessary votes were obtained through the personal influence and prestige he commanded over a sizeable proportion of the laborers in the mine.

The group of oyabun and kobun whom he includes in his "clique" was assembled in the following manner:

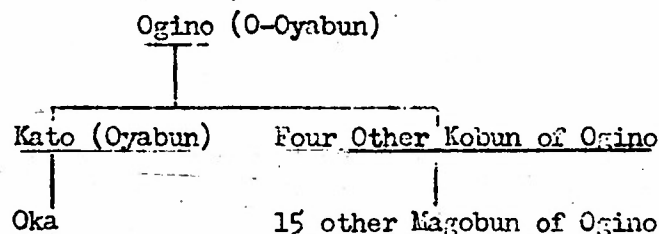
a) The first method employed exemplifies the "natural development" process as defined previously. Oka had two kobun who, in turn, had one and three kobun respectively. A number of common miners were supervised directly by each of these kobun. These clique members are indicated below in TABLE XI:

TABLE XI. CLIQUE FORMATION THROUGH KOBUN ACQUISITION



b) The second, and probably the most important method of expansion, was that of "adoption". TABLE XII diagrams the relationships of the principal individuals through whom the Oka cliques were extended.

TABLE XII. CLIQUE FORMATION THROUGH ADOPTION



Oka was the former kobun of Kato, who, in turn, was the kobun of the once powerful Ogino. Ogino, because of some conflict situation with the management of the employing company, had to leave the mine and his leadership fell into the hands of Kato (Oka's oyabun). Kato was a capable leader and was therefore able to maintain the solidarity of the kumi. However, when he was still relatively young (49 years old), he died, leaving the group with the possibility of no leadership and the eventual dissolution of the original kumi. However, Oka, the hero of the case, was able to maneuver his way into a position of leadership. Oka's problem of gaining leadership over this group was complicated by the fact that he was younger than most other members of the original kumi and also by the fact that others held a higher position in relation to the o-oyabun, Ogino. These others were the kobun of Ogino, acquired while he (Oka) was only a magobun. How he was able to bring this group under his control is an interesting story, but it can be sketched only briefly here. It must be noted that by this time, all the original kobun of Ogino had kobun in their own right and so did Oka.

Oka had a former ototobun who had left the mines and accumulated some wealth in his absence. This former ototobun, Ueda, returned to the mine at the propitious moment (for Oka) and became a manager of the branch office of the company which owned this mine. According to Ueda, he

wanted to "return his giri",³¹ so he helped Oka in many ways, both

³¹ A "moral obligation" to repay past favors or to make good a promise. See Ruth Benedict, 1949, p.116 for a chart of obligations and repayments.

financially and politically. Ueda appointed Oka to a position in the Company, and although the company regulations did not permit a labor supplier to be a company official at the same time, this was circumvented by appointing Oka's wife as the official labor supplier.

Thus, Oka, by these personal ties with the manager of the company, held enough prestige to force recognition of his leadership over the original kumi of Ogino. Through these kumi members his control was exerted over their kobun and their laborers as well. Since each of these members had at least three kobun and a number of laborers, this extension of influence was considerable.

c) A third means which Oka used in order to increase the size of his clique was the exploitation of his own relatives and the relatives of his former oyabun. In the first category there were his two sons, a son-in-law, a brother, a brother-in-law, this brother-in-law's wife's three brothers, and the latter's two kobun. In the second category was the connection he was able to make through the obligation he undertook upon the death of his former oyabun, Kato, to support and aid the deceased's family. This obligation is one of the most explicit responsibilities of the kobun in an traditional oyabun-kobun system. Through the social ties of the widow's relatives, he brought into his clique seven other oyabun and kobun.

Although the techniques used by Oka to increase his sphere of influence were shrewdly employed, they are by no means the only explanation for his success. His personality and his "character" were also important. These, of course, are appraised in terms of the clique members' own standards.

"He is the kind of a person," according to the way his followers put it, "who is quite alert to other people's desires and needs." The members of the group point to the humbleness of Oka who "even now calls the son of his former oyabun 'elder brother' (i.e., a term of respect)." He helps his kobun in making arrangements for marriage, gives aid when they are in need, and "does it sincerely." Thus, his kobun go to him at every opportunity for advice and guidance, "no matter how trivial they may be."

An example of this devotion was shown when one of Oka's kobun was at the point of death following an automobile accident. Instead of asking for his wife or children, he asked for Oka, his oyabun. The reason is clear: by securing Oka's promise to care for his family, they placed Oka under severe obligation (giri) to fulfill that promise. With this assurance obtained, the kobun died.

2) The kumi council. The "kumi council" is an organization which is primarily concerned with the problem of governing the formal relations between individual kumi. Its structure and functions have certain similarities to the traditional family council of Japan which governs relations among individual branch families. One of the most formalistic types of these councils were those which were prevalent in the coal and iron mining industries a generation or so ago.³² Today, most of these have

³² See Kunio Odaka, 1950, for an example of such an organization in a smeltery.

disappeared, but remnants are found in isolated mining groups. By way of example, a description of an actual kumi council in a coal mine may be presented.³³

³³ This description of the kumi council is based upon a study prepared by Mr. Matsushima of the Department of Sociology, Tokyo University.

a) Membership of the kumi council. The members of the kumi council were appointed or elected, as the case may be, from the three main status groups of miners. For convenience, these may be called: "apprentice," "journeyman," and "master miner." TABLE XIII (below) diagrams the principal hierarchy of the kumi council and how it was linked to the status system of the miners.

TABLE XIII. THE KUMI COUNCIL AND MINERS' STATUSES

Status System of Miners

Master miners
Journeyman
Apprentice



Kumi Council

<u>Genroyaku</u>
<u>Hyogin</u> <u>Hakomoto</u> <u>Otoban</u>
<u>Tobangashira</u>

The lowest ranking council members, tobangashira, were appointed by the group of officers in the next highest position, viz. hyogin, hakomoto, and otoban. Their term of office was generally not specified, but was limited by the fact that their status changed upon the completion of their term of apprenticeship. Because the period of apprenticeship was usually about three years, and because they were not usually appointed to the council until they had worked in the mine for at least two years, their term of service was limited to about a year. The number of tobangashira varied from two to eight or more. Their principal duties were to run errands, fetch tea, and carry messages; thus, they were the "legmen" of

the council.

Within the middle class of officers of the council, there were three distinguishable offices, the hyogiin, the hakomoto, and the otoban. The otoban and the hakomoto were the "administrative" officers of the council. Together, they kept records of the council, handled details of the budget, administered the collection of "fees" from workers to finance the council's activities, took the principal roles in the initiation ceremonies, and appointed new candidates for kobunship to the individual oyabun. They were all oyabun in their own right and also had worked in the mines for a considerable number of years. In their technical roles, they were usually employed as section foremen. Depending upon the size of the labor force controlled by the oyabun, there were usually three or four officers of this category. Nominally, their term of office was one or two years, but in practice they were appointed for many years successively. They were in principle "elected" by a general meeting of all the boss-controlled workers, but actually the choice of officers was made by the genroyaku (see Chart IV) and hyogiin who "worked behind the scenes" and presented their selection to the assembly for formal approval.

The hyogiin was probably the most important person in this organization, although his influence did not exceed that of the titular head, the genroyaku. The former's role was that of a general coordinator and supervisor of the council and, in this respect, not unlike that of an executive secretary of a labor union. He was the personal advisor to the genroyaku and the "go-between" between the other members of the council and the highest officer of the council. Since it was not common to have in this office a person with less than twenty years of service in the mines, he was usually an official with an extensive background of experience in the business.

Finally, there was a group of two or three officials who together occupied the office of genroyaku. The genroyaku were the titular heads of the council and as such they constituted a "council of elders" in matters pertaining to the over-all management of kumi organizations. These men were formerly common miners who had worked themselves up through the ranks, had as much as thirty years experience in the mines, and had the greatest familiarity with all the traditional aspects of mining operations. In most cases, they were men who held responsible positions in the company which operated the mine. Thus, they were men who identified themselves with the company's policies, yet at the same time, had considerable control over the common laborers.³⁴

³⁴ It is interesting in this respect to contrast the position of these men with those of labor union officials in the United States. In the latter case, their principal means of livelihood is provided either by the union or by their services as a laborer of comparable grade as their union members. Thus the genroyaku, though nominally identified with the workers, could not be divorced from their primary loyalty to the management.

b) Functions of the kumi council. Normally, the labor council met once a month. One way by which the business of these council meetings can be illustrated is to present a table (TABLE KIV) showing a sample list of expenditures of the Kosaka Mines in Ibaragi Prefecture for the years 1911 and 1912:

TABLE KIV. A SELECTED LIST OF EXPENDITURES OF THE KUMI COUNCIL OF KOSAKA MINE (1911 and 1912)

Worker's Benefits:

Compensation for injured workers
Compensation for sick workers
Compensation for debt-ridden workers
Allowance for workers who terminate work (sambetsu)
Aid to defray deceased worker's funeral expenses (koden)
Expense for memorial service for deceased workers (bosanhi)

Inter-mine "Goodwill" Expenses:

Contributions to "welfare fund drives" of other mines (kifu)
Hospitality expenses for worker's from other mines (kosaihi)³⁵
Travelling expense (sotatsuryu)³⁶

Administrative Expenses:

Cost of monthly meetings
Token payment of officers (hoshu)

³⁵ There is an obligation of each mine to feed and shelter kobun of other mines. The principal requirement for the recipient was to recite jingi. A kobun not knowing jingi will be refused hospitality and be regarded as an imposter or a spy. (See Part II, B. 3 for a discussion of jingi)

³⁶ "Travelling expense" is a special expense involved in paying escorts for crippled and aged workers who are no longer able to support themselves in a given mine. These needy persons go from mine to mine until they somehow find someone who can take care of them.

A perusal of the list of expenditures indicates some of the important functions of the kumi council. In the first place, it indicates the fact that the council looked after the welfare of the workers (injury, sickness, etc.). These compensations, of course, supplemented the "largess" which individual oyabun gave men who were in need. That is to say, the money for these expenses was given or loaned to the oyabun in cases where the amount needed by the kobun was unusually large or when

the oyabun was particularly low on funds.

In the second place, an item on the list, "expense for memorial service...", alludes to an important aspect of the labor boss system, namely, its responsibilities in regard to the sacred. The fact that the council helped pay for the memorial services of deceased workers was another way of saying that the members of the kumi and the council felt a social and religious obligation to provide for and look after the sacred as well as the secular life of the workers.

In the third place, "obligatory contributions" or assessments (kifu), were made frequently to other mines. By the same token a given council raised funds by this means when it faced a need to do so. This suggests that there existed some diffuse and informal linkages connecting the workers of one mine with another. It also meant that the practice of jingi between workers of different mines utilized the network of inter-council relations already established by the kifu (contribution) custom.

In other ways, the functions of the council was not quite as obvious, but nonetheless equally significant. The first of these was a way of maintaining certain customary standards in order to train apprentices and to govern the personal conduct of workers. It kept a general record of training or work achievements and conduct violations. As a system of sanctions, workers who violated the more sacred of these mores or who ran away from the mine were placed upon a "black list" which made it difficult for them to find work in other mines.

A second diffuse function was the role the council played as a superordinate organization which kept a watchful eye over the sometimes erratic and arbitrary rule of individual oyabun. The council could act as an informal sounding board by which complaints of abuses by individual oyabun eventually found their way through the "grape-vine" into the ears of the council. Depending upon the seriousness of the complaint, the council, through its officers, could privately suggest that the oyabun mend his ways or apply various sanctions against him, such as the withdrawal of certain benefits (e.g., loans for welfare purposes), public reprimand, and in extreme cases, forcing his banishment from the mine.

A third implicit function of the council was to maintain a "balance of power" among the oyabun, whose solidarity might be threatened by an overly ambitious or unscrupulous oyabun. In the oyabun-kobun system, one measure of a leader's influence and power was, of course, the size of his kumi. Thus, by the use of its prerogative to designate the choice (from among many candidates) and the number of apprentices assigned to each oyabun, the kumi council placed checks upon the growth of any single oyabun's power and prestige. Moreover, the ability of an oyabun to keep his men in a high state of morale depended to a large extent upon his wealth and "economic power." The council can, by withholding or appropriating money from its welfare fund, weaken the powerful oyabun and strengthen the weak ones.

However, it must be stated parenthetically that due to chance or external circumstances individual oyabun have become overly-influential

in spite of these controls. These were cases where oyabun by judicious and fortunate moves placed their own kobun in various offices of the council and through them exerted influence and power. Like a national government, the council can act as both an "equalizer" of competition, or as a tool to further monopolistic control.

Finally, as stated above, the fact that the responsible officers of the council were at the same time given responsible positions in the management functions of the mining enterprise had some important implications as to what the council would or would not do in behalf of the workers. This close identity of the council officers with management made it unlikely that they would permit the council to act as an important avenue through which demands to improve working conditions or to raise wages would be made.

IV. SOME SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE LABOR BOSS SYSTEM

This report began with a general statement that in spite of many outward signs of "westernization" in Japanese social, political and economic institutions, a number of characteristic Japanese features have been retained. One such set of Japanese traits was identified as the "oyabun-kobun system." It was stated that the purpose of the report was to illustrate how these oyabun-kobun patterns operate within a particular Japanese organization. For this illustrative purpose a type of labor organization, called here the "labor boss system," was selected. The labor boss system was considered to be particularly suitable for this purpose for several reasons: a) a substantial proportion of the Japanese population was dependent upon this type of organization for its livelihood, as was indicated by the fact that some two or three million laborers out of the total industrial labor force of 15 or more millions were employed through labor boss channels; b) the Allied Occupation, in one of its many reform programs in the field of labor, attempted to eliminate this system; and c) sufficient materials of a detailed nature (more than those included in this report) were available both from the official reports of the Occupation and from private investigations.

In this concluding section of the report, an attempt will be made to draw some implications from the case studies and the descriptive generalizations presented in the foregoing sections. These implications will be focused on two principal goals: one, to present in a systematic fashion some of the major oyabun-kobun patterns which function within the organization of the labor boss system, and two, to indicate how this system fulfills certain important "needs" of laborers, employers, and other groups in Japanese society.

A. The Role of the Oyabun-Kobun Patterns in the Labor Boss System.

1) A model for the "expressive" system. It is a common observation that every concrete social organization has two broad categories of goals or functions which must be fulfilled if it is to continue as an organization. These two sets of goals may be designated as: first, the "instrumental goals," e.g., the production of goods (for manufacturing plants), the sale of goods (for commercial establishments), or the winning of a war (for military forces). Second, the "expressive goals," i.e., the promotion of solidarity within the group, the development of an esprit de corps, the provision of common value-orientations and the maintenance of a practical moral code. These two broad categories of goals are achieved by means of more or less explicit

systems of human relationships found in the respective organizations³⁷

37. These systems have commonly been referred to as "formal" and "informal" organizations by sociologists, but because in the labor boss system both of these organizations are formalized, the terms "instrumental" and "expressive" have been substituted.

And are here designated respectively as the "instrumental" and the "expressive" systems or structures. This is not to say, however, that the same individuals act only in one system or the other; on the contrary, to a greater or lesser extent the same individuals participate in both systems of the organization.

As might be expected, these two systems are found in the labor boss organization. In this organization both systems are highly formalized, and, though they overlap through the participation of some individual in both systems, each system is distinguishable from the other by a different set of well defined roles and behavior patterns. This can be illustrated by the case of the Sano Dormitory Group.³⁸ The instrumental structure of the Sano Group included

38. In other case studies presented in this report, the discussion has been purposely limited to the description of the expressive systems.

the labor boss, his personal administrative staff (the kambu), and the four work teams, each of which was made up of "drillers" and "carriers." The kambu, it will be recalled, was composed of the four work team leaders (sewayaki) and the administrative clerk (chozuke), all of whom were also members of the kumi organization. Each individual, while acting as a member of the instrumental system, was also designated by an appropriate occupational title, and, as was described above, his duties, job functions, and authority were ideally defined according to his position or work specialty in the tunneling operation.

The expressive structure of the Sano Group, on the other hand, was previously described in terms of the kumi organization. Its official membership was constituted by the oyabun, four ojibun, and four kobun.³⁹ The ex-official membership of the expressive

39. The number of each grade of members (except the oyabun, of course) varies for given boss organizations.

system was made up of the wives and relations of the official kumi members as well as of the remaining laborers of the Dormitory

Group. As already indicated, the titles and statuses of each member were designated by the modified Japanese kinship terminology of the oyabun-kobun system. The expected behavior and attitudes held by the members, while they were acting in their roles as kumi members, were also defined according to the norms of the oyabun-kobun system. The elite kumi members, it was suggested, were those individuals who were bound by the close reciprocal obligations and duties to each other, who looked to the leader as a foster father, and who participated in initiation, jingi, and other ceremonial functions. It is, therefore, in the context of the expressive, rather than the instrumental system of human relationships that these oyabun-kobun patterns play the most significant role.

To digress for a moment, the fact that in the labor boss system the oyabun-kobun patterns are especially significant in the expressive system suggests a number of profitable research avenues. It may be generalized that the reason why certain aspects of the oyabun-kobun pattern are found in so many diverse institutions of Japan is that the expressive system of a given organization or institution is much more "malleable" than the instrumental, and therefore can be "grafted" on almost any Japanese organizational structure without creating dire consequences in the effectiveness of the instrumental structure. Thus, it is conceivable that a Japanese political party organization can have an expressive system designed along the lines of the oyabun-kobun pattern without endangering (in fact sometimes promoting) the instrumental organization of the party. Similarly, some evidence has been found from casual reading that some of the large industrial organizations as the zaibatsu, with their virile instrumental systems of organization, have an expressive system the characteristics of which are in many respects reminiscent of the oyabun-kobun model. The underworld gang organizations, likewise, seem to have an expressive system founded on oyabun-kobun patterns, but an instrumental system designed to meet the particular exigencies of their racketeering operations.

It would appear that this observation, to the extent that it may be found valid, has important implications for practical action. For instance, in the case of a political party, where major party decisions are nominally settled by casting ballots, it may be fruitful to inquire into the attitudes of those who occupy the principal roles in the expressive system, rather than of those in the instrumental organization, because the latter roles may be occupied by persons who may be a "front" for somebody working behind the proverbial bamboo screen. This "somebody" might turn out to be a person with high status in the expressive system only, namely, an important "oyabun." Decisions made by this oyabun may later appear as the majority opinion when the votes are cast.

Similarly, in industrial organizations, when a practical man (say, a business promoter or a salesman) finds that his suggestions meet with resistance from the incumbents of an official role (i.e., in an instrumental structure), he may find it convenient to select a more pragmatic approach to accomplish his ends-namely, to define his "approach" in the structure of the expressive system and develop relations with the people by means of this system. Since the people in this expressive system (if patterned on the oyabun-kobun model) would be linked through a series of specific duties and obligations, the practical man should strive to manipulate these obligations, as successful Japanese customarily do when they give lavish geisha parties at tea-houses, exchange favors and bits of business information, offer presents and other subtle forms of bribes, set up games of go (where the stakes are high and the host deliberately but cleverly loses), and the like.

Returning to the labor boss system, it is worth repeating that the same individual may and does occupy roles in both the expressive and the instrumental systems. This does not mean, however, that their relative status in one system is comparable to their relative status in the other. Thus, in the Sano Dormitory Group, the person designated as the "senior kobun" was, for the instrumental structure, actually a "deputy boss" (dainin choba), but in the expressive system he was ranked as a kobun and thus was outranked by the four ojibun. The status of the ojibun, it will be recalled, was a rank in the expressive system just below that of the oyabun. This illustrates an implicit point made previously in connection with a generalization for analyzing types of organizations (other than the labor boss) like political parties or industrial organizations. That is, if these other types of organizations do have an expressive system based upon oyabun-kobun patterns, it is worth noting that an individual holding a high position in the instrumental system may not necessarily hold a comparable position in the expressive system. He may actually hold a very low position in the expressive system for various reasons. He may be only a technical expert on a particular job, and may lack sufficient social standing or proper family background to hold a responsible role in the expressive system, or he may be a "front man" for a person high in the expressive system who finds it politically or socially inexpedient to assume a high position in the instrumental structure. These considerations make it necessary for the practical man - if he is to deal successfully with a given organization - to learn the dimensions of the expressive system as well as those of the instrumental.

2) Delineation of the channels for intergroup alliances. In addition to giving form and substance to the expressive system, the oyabun-kobun patterns are important in defining the channels through which relationships between individual boss groupings are formed and utilized. The case studies presented in the latter part of section III illustrated how a given leader may be an o-oyabun to other oyabun

bosses and thus form a complex hierarchical organization of many boss-dominated groups; or again, how two or more independent oyabun may form a "brotherhood" (kyodaibun) linkage between their respective organizations. The term "kumi clique" was used to designate a loosely formed alliance of labor bosses, while the "kumi council" (somewhat analogous to a trade union council) referred to a more bureaucratic type of association of labor bosses. A similar generalization could be suggested here in connection with the previous discussion on political parties and industrial organizations: namely, if such organizations (non-labor type) were found to have an expressive system modelled on the oyabun-kobun patterns, it is possible that inter-group or interorganizational alliances would be initially formed along lines illustrated above by the case of the labor boss system.

3) Definition of moral codes and norms. Up to this point the discussion has been focused on the organizational principles of the oyabun-kobun patterns in their relation to the structural characteristics of the labor boss system. And throughout this discussion such terms as "norms" and "codes" have been used without much explanation. It seems pertinent at this point to define these normative elements more fully.

It might be noted here, parenthetically, that these moral codes and norms have been derived from an analysis of the ways in which individuals are expected to behave in given institutional situations. It is presumed that once an individual has been inducted into the organization, it is to his personal interest to conform to these norms or codes, if he wants to "get along" well with others. From the standpoint of the organization, these norms can be understood as expectations which the group holds toward the behavior of each participant member; and conversely, from the standpoint of a given member, the norms define what behavior he can expect of others in the group within the given institutional situation.

Some of the significant oyabun-kobun norms and codes which apply to the labor boss system may now be described.

(a) Normative stress upon group solidarity. The labor boss system places high value upon group solidarity, and its social relationships are premised upon the furtherance of this set of norms. The symbolism in the initiation ceremonies concerning "birth" into the group, the jingi rituals, the manifold obligations of the oyabun vis a vis the kobun are instances where this code of group solidarity and collectivity-orientation are exemplified among the kumi members. But for the organization as a whole, perhaps the best example of this stress upon solidarity is that the wages from the employer are not parcelled out individually to each worker, but given to the oyabun who in turn distributes the rewards of the group production according to how he thinks this distribution would promote group solidarity and

loyalty to him as the symbol of that group solidarity. Similarly, the great flexibility in wage payments (e.g., incentive payments, payments in kind, bonuses) that the labor boss has is a way of facilitating this objective. This philosophy of wage distribution applies to some extent to ordinary workers (i.e., non-kumi) where the base wages were paid - at least in the case of Sano Dormitory Group - on a business-like basis (so much for each unit of work), but incentive wages, bonuses, payments in kind and other rewards are given according to oyabun-kobun norms.

(b) Valuation of individual's achievement rather than his social attributes. The second set of norms in the labor boss system has to do with the problem of specifying in broad terms how its participants are to be given benefits, privileges, deference, rewards, and other differential treatment. In principle, any organization may specify that this differential treatment of an individual should be made on the basis of (a) ascription (i.e., according to certain "qualities" of that individual as his age-sex and social standing, his position in the family, and his membership in external organizations) or (b) on the basis of achievement (i.e., according to the actual or expected performances or the contributions he may make to the productivity of the organization). It seems obvious that in this context the norm for the labor boss system is of the achievement type rather than the ascriptive. This must necessarily be so because laborers who are included in the boss organizations generally represent the underprivileged and the "undesirable" elements of Japan's labor force. It is the consideration of what a person can do and not his social attributes that qualify him for membership; and the same norm prevails for any benefits, rewards, and deference that accrues to him.

This analytical distinction seems particularly relevant in distinguishing the norms of the family system as against those of the boss system. In the Japanese family organization, primary value is focused upon the ascriptive rather than the achievement aspects of the individual. Thus, the father is to be respected and honored by his son, not because of what he has achieved, but because of the sheer ascriptive nature of his relationship to that son.

(c) Particularistic standard for appraising individuals. Given the proposition that in the labor boss system the norm for treating individuals is made in terms of achievement rather than in ascriptive terms, there is a further problem of what the standards are by which this achievement is to be evaluated. These standards can be analytically distinguished as being either universalistic or particularistic. The first is a criterion specified by legalistic, formalistic, and/or impersonal rules and regulations (e.g., specified years of experience, amount of requisite training); the other is a criterion specified by personal needs and particular kinship or friendship relationships held with the appraiser of the individual

under consideration. In the boss system, this set of norms seem to be of the latter, or particularistic, type rather than the former. In the case materials it was amply shown that individuals received higher or lower amounts of "rewards" depending upon the personal likes and dislikes of the oyabun, upon the closeness or distance in personal ties, and upon the degree of need indicated by the recipient, provided, of course, he qualified by the minimum degree of "achievement" required.

Thus the combination of the previous and the present set of norms (the valuation of achievement as measured in terms of particularistic standards is important in specifying the method by which individuals are to be appraised for performance, participation, and rewards in the labor boss system. As a consequence, the normative prescriptions for the differential treatment (e.g., promotions) of an individual in the labor boss system tend to be construed not as something which the individual has "earned" or that he has a "right" to, but more as something he received as a "favor" or as an act of "grace." If, on the other hand, such differential treatment of an individual was made by a combination of norms of achievement evaluated in universalistic terms (as it is most often the case in large industrial concerns both in Japan and in the U.S.) then such acts would be considered not as a "favor", but as something to which he has a "right" or something which is a legitimate "privilege" to enjoy.

(d) Diffused authority. Finally, the fourth set of norms concerns the range of control and authority expected of the leader or boss. In the labor boss system, this authority is diffused over a wide range of prerogatives and situations. As the cases already presented indicate, the oyabun has jurisdiction over the "business" as well as certain "private" affairs of his workers, and over the technological as well as the social activities of his staff. Thus, the oyabun is the ritual leader in ceremonial activities of the group, he personally supervises his subordinates on the job, he determines their pay, he mediates in quarrels among workers and between workers and their wives, he helps to select wives for those who are single, he provides the workers with entertainment, and, if it is a dormitory group, he designates the housing and messing facilities of the laborers. This type of diffused authority which is both normative and "real" as a pattern is in sharp contrast with the specific type of authority that is characteristic of leaders in bureaucratic organizations as, say, a foreman in a large factory. Authority in such cases is confined to a specific job or function, and the diffused control over the workers' lives is lacking - or at least the system is normatively defined in this manner.

B. Some Needs Fulfilled by the Labor Boss System

From the foregoing discussion, it was seen that the oyabun-kobun patterns played a significant part in structuring labor boss

organizations. These patterns were found to be especially important in the expressive system of the boss organizations, in the way in which several such organizations collaborated in pursuing common ends, and in the definition of codes and norms governing human relations within the labor boss organization. Those who are familiar with or have interest in the so-called "national character structure" or "basic personality" of the Japanese should find that the kinds of attitudes, role behavior, and value-orientations of the boss system would, in general, require the personality characteristics (or character structure) of the Japanese as outlined by Ruth Benedict.⁴⁰

40. See The Chrysanthemum and the Sword, 1946. Here reference is made to such things as the tendency of the Japanese, according to Benedict, to structure their relationships in hierarchical order ("taking one's proper station"), to hold to a situational, rather than universal, type of ethic ("circles of virtue"), to follow a highly refined system of social obligations and duties (on, giri, gimu), to stress the power of will over one's material needs (principle of "self-discipline" and asceticism), to place reliance upon external (social) sanctions for good behavior rather than upon internalized conviction of sin ("shame, not guilt, culture").

However, other considerations would prevail for the behavior of Japanese in other settings- for example, a large, modern factory.

But aside from the suggestion that the labor boss system is harmonious with certain aspects of Japanese character structure, it seems pertinent at this juncture to evaluate this functionally positive aspect against some of the socially "unhealthy" or "dysfunctional" aspects of the system. In the introductory section of this report and throughout the other sections, it was seen that there are a number of socially problematic features of the labor boss system. There were listed a number of "abuses" committed by the boss: he often pocketed a large percentage of the worker's rightful share of the earnings, his methods of discipline had brutal aspects, and his authority was both autocratic and diffused over a wide range of prerogatives.

What, then, is the reason for the persistence of the labor boss organizations? Why do not workers band together and do something about the system as did the Japanese peasants, when they frequently revolted against their rulers during the Tokugawa period? Why have there not existed laws prohibiting such an exploitative and feudalistic system?

The "common sense" answers or segmental explanations given to such questions do not seem to be either realistic or practical. They seem to be directed more at the symptoms or surface manifestations rather than at the disease itself. For example, while the Japanese character structure undoubtedly has some role to play in the persistence of the system, it must be asked, how can it be changed without changing the structure of Japanese society? Or, as it is frequently said, if these laborers were more "class conscious", if they were

less "docile", if employers were inclined to be more socially conscious, and if the government were less feudalistic and more actively liberal, some of the problematic features of the boss system would be eradicated. Obviously, there is more to the situation than attitudes, customs, and personality factors per se.

A more sociologically tenable explanation seems to be that this system of labor recruitment and organization is fulfilling certain "needs" of the society and of the laborers concerned, and that these needs overbalance the abuses and the problematic features of the system. In the following paragraphs, then, some of these needs of the society and the "functional supports" of the system will be examined in order to indicate: (a) what variables are necessary to manipulate in order to effect a change; or, in the event that these variables cannot be manipulated due to certain economic and historical conditions, (b) why the system persists.⁴¹

⁴¹. These variables will be discussed primarily with references to the period just previous to the Occupation's attempt to effect certain changes in the labor boss system. Though it would be interesting to give details of the relative success the Occupation achieved in eradicating certain elements of the system, such matters lie outside the scope of this report.

1) Provision for social security. The problem of controlling their fate and those of their dependents with regard to economic hazards brought about by illness, disability or death, unemployment, and old age confronts the working people the world over. Increasingly since the turn of the century in most industrialized societies, protection against these economic hazards has been assumed by large scale organizations - huge labor unions, large industrial concerns, health and accident insurance companies, and both state and national governments. For instance, in the United States, especially since the beginning of the New Deal era, our national and state governments have established a system for the payment of social security, old-age retirement, unemployment compensation, and accident and disability benefits. By contrast, until the postwar period in Japan, these general social security measures have been established only to a limited extent and it is too early to say whether the new social security measures fostered by the Occupation will continue to remain on the statute books.

By and large, the economic burdens brought about by the unemployment, disability, death or old age of the breadwinner were assumed in Japan by the members of the extended family and by individual employers sensitive to such obligations and financially able to assume them. To a more limited extent, Japanese labor unions, especially since the growth of these organizations, shared some of these burdens.

But the security and welfare measures of employers and of the trade unions, of course, applied only to those workers who constituted the regular members of the union or the permanent employees of the establishment. For laborers who were outside the family of unions and of a company - the millions of migratory, seasonal, and casual laborers - institutionalized means for attaining such security were indeed rare.⁴² Among the few means available, the labor

42. In the postwar period, the national and local governments, through their special welfare agencies, provided some relief to these workers, e.g., the construction of certain kinds of housing, the establishment of welfare clinics and hospital care, and the distribution of food for the unemployed. Also a national unemployment insurance plan for regular and casual laborers and a few vocational training centers were established.

boss organization was the principal recognized system for attaining at least a token measure of social and employment security for these "deprived" classes of laborers. As was seen from the case materials, there were numerous instances of the important roles played by the system in the workers' quest for security. Not all of these benefits were provided by each labor boss, of course, for they varied according to the size, organizational efficiency, and wealth of each organization controlled by the boss. Nevertheless, one of the important, recognized functions of the labor boss system, as an institutional system, was to provide some, if not most, of these security measures.

But the fact that these benefits or security measures were provided is no less important than how they were provided. As was noted above, in complex industrial societies these social security measures have been assumed by increasingly large institutional arrangements. It is significant that, as these protective institutions become larger, they become by necessity more bureaucratic, more formalistic, and more impersonal when dealing with any given needy "client". Certain rules and standards have to be laid down so that individuals entitled to benefits would get them fairly, without discrimination or favoritism. In time, these rules become rigidly defined and rigidly held so that individual clients cannot be handled as individuals. Instead, each client becomes a "case" which is appraised in objective terms and where officially no exceptions can be made unless a rule providing for such exceptions is specified.⁴³

43. The manner in which large scale organizations must appraise individuals as "cases" is an instance of the "universalistic" standard of appraisal which was referred to above in connection with the norms of the labor boss system.

Now, it is noteworthy that the labor boss organizations provide social security on a very personal and individualistic basis. Aid or benefits are given according to the particularistic code of the system. In so far as these security measures are provided on such a basis, the labor boss system seems to serve a distinct function for those people not culturally trained in bureaucratic procedure and in the manipulation of channels for obtaining aid, as indeed most boss-controlled workers are.^{43a}

43a. Those who have had the experience of dealing with Japanese bureaucrats- both in business and in government- would sympathize with these particularistically-oriented laborers.

2) Fulfilment of other needs of casual laborers. Social security measures are only one set of functions which the labor boss organization performs. In addition, there are a number of special needs of boss-dominated type of laborers that the system served. Among these, an obvious one is that of providing food, shelter, transportation, and certain trade tools, especially for the migratory type of laborers. Though exact statistics are not available, a substantial proportion of the boss-controlled workers were engaged in migratory or seasonal types of employments which required them to leave their residences and live in labor camps or other housing provided by either the employers or by the government. Under such conditions of employment, there is a need for some kind of customary organization with attendant codes, norms, and leadership patterns to handle effectively such details as transportation, housing, boarding, and other related requirements. The case of the Sano Dormitory Group is a typical example. Facilitated by custom and regulated by their code, Sano and his staff carried on the myriads of administrative duties required. In spite of its abuses, its authoritarian leadership, and its crude practice of favoritism, this system of organization seems to have certain advantages over an unorganized collection of workers.

The disadvantages of not having an implicit model of social organization for a group of migratory workers is illustrated by the case of a million or so migratory farm laborers in the United States, where such a model is notably lacking.⁴⁴

44. See Maurice T. Van Hecke and others, Migratory Labor In American Agriculture, 1951. The discussion in this paragraph is based upon the materials in this comprehensive report made by the President's Commission on Migratory Labor. All page notations document the page from which the particular reference was taken.

The report of the President's Commission on Migratory Labor states,

"Their (the migrants') heavily laden cars or trucks, packed with beds, cooking utensils, and furniture are easily distinguished from those of campers on vacation... All along the way are those who take advantage of the migratory worker's helplessness. Professional gamblers, prostitutes, and peddlers of dope follow the work routes to obtain, each in his own way, a share of the migrant's money...

"They encamp in tents or simply under canvas.. supported by a rope strung between two trees or from the side of the car to the ground. They sleep on pallets, or on bedsprings or folding cots which some of them carry. Where rains are frequent during work season they find shelter in crude shacks. On farms they use what shelter their employers may provide. (p.4)

"For the migrant, there are few elements of stability in his work. What the employer of migratory farm-labor hires is usually not a man to fill a job, but rather labor service such as picking hundredweights of cotton, hoeing acres of beets, and picking hampers of beans; and the wages are usually piece rates. The employment relationship is highly impersonal. Often the employer maintains no payroll and he does not know the names of his employees nor how many on any given day are working for him. When the work is ready, such matters as experience, prior employment, or residence in the area count for little or nothing. Hiring is on a day-by-day basis. Labor turn-over in a harvest crew may be 100 percent within a week or less." (p.18)

Thus, when seen in the light of a similar occupational group in a different culture, the labor boss system provides its migratory laborers with some benefits derived from and controlled by its code, customs, and organization.

Another set of functions is the role the labor boss system plays in stabilizing the seniority claims to a job and in enhancing the transferability of a given worker's skill and experience from one job to another. This problem of transferability is an important consideration for any worker who must repeatedly change jobs from time to time. For a worker who is unattached to such groups as a labor boss organization or a trade union, it means generally that for each change in jobs, he must enter at the bottom of the occupational scale of the employing company or at best at a position somewhat lower than his previous job. Of course, there are good reasons why Japanese employers "penalize" new employees in such a manner. Workers new to the establishment, in spite of years of experience and certain requisite skills developed while working in another company, relearn a certain amount of new skills and make a series of new adjustments. Of importance

with reference to people like the Japanese, who traditionally maintain strong ingroup feelings, is the fact that the candidate must make crucial adjustments to his fellow workers. Other considerations are that the initiate must adjust to the special customs of the plant, and perhaps even to a different model of the same type of machinery with which he was accustomed. These factors, then, justify in part why a new employee is considered less efficient and less productive than workers with longer tenure in the company.

It becomes evident from the previous descriptions that the labor boss system to a large degree does facilitate the transferability of skills and experience of a worker from one job to another, simply by virtue of the fact that changeover from employer to employer is made on a group rather than an individual basis and also by the fact that labor bosses do have considerable autonomy with respect to certain of the technical operations for which they contract their workers. Furthermore, the institutionalization of the training functions of the system also enable the worker to learn the requisite skills from his oyabun or the latter's assistants, a function which the employer generally takes for granted. Such on-the-job training which the system provides is an important function when one considers the fact that vocational training in Japanese public institutions is relatively limited.

3) Provision of an alternative avenue of social mobility. At the same time that the labor boss system provides some measure of social security, it also functions as a means of providing an alternative channel of social mobility for achievement-oriented people who are not able to pursue the respectable avenues in Japanese society. As was stated before, the people in this system by and large are those who were not able to find employment and pursue the "normal" channels of success in the more respectable trades, businesses and other organizations because they did not have the "proper" family background, lacked the opportunity to gain the requisite training or education, did not have sufficiently influential "go-betweens" or persons of reference, lacked capital to start business on their own, or otherwise failed to obtain the necessary entree.

There are, of course, other mobility channels in Japanese society which such underprivileged persons might have selected, for example, the various quasi-legitimate tekiya (organization of small open-air shops or "street-stalls" found in many large cities) or the more illegitimate operations like the gurentai and the kashimoto racketeering and gambling syndicates, which were mentioned in the Introduction. But the labor boss system, as far as numbers are concerned, seems to be the most important.

There is little doubt that the system as such provides the social structure and other requirements necessary for organizing this "alternative" channel of social mobility. In its normative aspect, it was seen that there is considerable emphasis upon achievement and attaining success. A number of fairly integrated customs and ceremonies -- basically those of the oyabun-kobun patterns -- are found. A pattern of ranking individuals and groups with appropriate terminological system is also indicated by the data presented. Furthermore, these social dimensions apply not only to the workers themselves, but also to their respective families and dependents. In essence, therefore, the boss system is a relatively independent society within the larger national society. As a kind of society, then, the functional requirements for social mobility are also present.

Though the case materials in the foregoing sections have been particularly meagre in this respect, the cases of Oka and that of his unnamed benefactor provide examples where social mobility was successful, even with respect to the larger non-kumi society. Oka, it will be recalled, through devious ways analyzed previously, achieved success in the system as well in the larger society by winning an elective post in the village council, primarily as the result of his kumi contacts. In short, he achieved considerable local prominence, though he was, by trade, only a miner. His unnamed benefactor, once a kobun of Oka, it was noted, later became a manager of the company employing Oka's kumi. Though the details of how he was able to achieve that position are unknown, it is apparent that his experience as a boss-controlled worker was not a real deterrent to his becoming a manager (i.e., a "white collar" job which also has its high prestige-value in Japan). But it is suggestive in this context that a kumi person who succeeds in establishing himself outside of the boss system may help other kumi members to acquire status. In fact there is a heavy moral duty (giri) to do so.

4) Functions for various other groupings in Japanese society. The labor boss system does not get its sole support from those whose daily living is dependent upon it. There are a number of other groups which seem tacitly or explicitly to support the system because of their special vested interests. Important among these are the various industrial concerns which employ these boss-controlled laborers, the government (especially during the last war), and the part-time farmers.

A brief mention was made in the early part of the report about how employers have sanctioned the continuation of this system of labor organization "because it enables them to avoid the traditional obligations involved in employer-employee relations." (These obligations themselves can be seen as a manifestation of generalized oyabun-kobun patterns.) For its permanent staff, employers were customarily expected to: (a) provide semi-annual bonuses at Obon and

New Year's holiday seasons; (b) provide some perquisites such as housing, transportation allowances, sickness benefits, and certain recreational facilities; (c) find employment in other establishments or provide substantial "dismissal payments" (sometimes as much as a year's salary) for employees who are released due to unsatisfactory performance or to other valid reasons; and (d) refrain from dismissing any employee merely because of temporary recession in business, but to spread the available work to all employees.⁴⁵

⁴⁵. This tendency was generally referred to by the Occupation officials as "diluted employment."

Because of these reasons, Japanese employers seemed to be highly cautious in increasing their staff in periods of business expansion and to be highly reluctant to release their employees in periods of business slack. In the former condition, labor boss workers could be freely added to the labor force and when business conditions worsened, they could be released freely without the requisite obligations incurred for regular employees. Thus, it can be seen that many employers have a vested interest in maintaining this system of labor recruitment.

The government has also utilized the labor boss system to its advantage. As was mentioned previously, the government in the last war took advantage of the existing labor boss organizations and used them as the principal means for mobilizing the large, but difficult to control, pools of casual and unskilled laborers. Even before the war, the government has recognized unofficially the utility of labor bosses in the tendency for official employment exchange agencies to depend upon labor bosses for recruitment of laborers.

Still another group which has some vested interest in the maintenance of this system of labor organization is the large, amorphous mass of "part-time" farmers. Japan's limited arable land and the extremely small acreage held by the average farmer makes it necessary for him to supplement his farm earnings by seeking other employment. In 1949, for instance, out of a total average monthly agricultural labor force of 17 million, there were between three and eight million farmers each month (due to seasonal variation of farm work) who were employed less than 35 hours on farm work.⁴⁶ As was illustrated by

⁴⁶. Japanese Government Ministry of Labor, Year Book of Labor Statistics and Research. 1949, p 63

the composition of the Sano Dormitory Group (where, at one time 31 of the total work group of about 80 workers were such part-time farmers) it was evident that the labor boss system was a convenient avenue by which these "deprived" farmers obtained seasonal employment.

C. Conclusion.

The foregoing discussion has enunciated some of the oyabun-kobun principles and premises upon which the labor boss system is organized, and the social needs the boss system seems to be satisfying to a greater or lesser degree. It is clear that any program which attempts to eliminate the vestiges of the system must modify these principles and premises upon which the structure of the system is based. But it should also be clear that this structure cannot be changed without shifting the forces which constitute its strength, namely the social needs and functions the system is fulfilling at the present time. More specifically, this means that the functions which the system is now serving must somehow be taken care of by other institutional structures, either currently existing or yet to be established.

To be sure, some measure of success might be achieved by direct frontal assaults upon the system, as exemplified by the efforts of the Occupation in its sponsorship of the Employment Security Law and the Labor Standards Law. These laws proscribed the bosses from practicing their labor supply businesses, prescribed labor standards, which required all employers to abide by certain employment practices, vigorously encouraged the unionization of workers, and made possible a national unemployment compensation system. These Occupation attempts, as was noted in the beginning were not effective in reducing the practice of labor boss methods. But the success to be achieved by such action - in the final analysis - would be obtained only to the degree in which these measures actually shift the social functions currently discharged by the labor boss system to other institutional structures within the total society.

In so far as there is a high degree of institutional rigidity due to certain fundamental factors such as Japan's limited foreign markets, the dearth of arable land, the particular type of industrial specialization (e.g., in textiles), the limited natural resources, a large excess population, the virile cultural patterns, and the difficulty of socializing people to a new value system within the span of a generation without the drastic extermination of a substantial proportion of the population -- there is a limit as to how much of the social functions now served by the boss system can be taken over by other institutional structures. And to this extent, the labor boss system will probably continue to operate.

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